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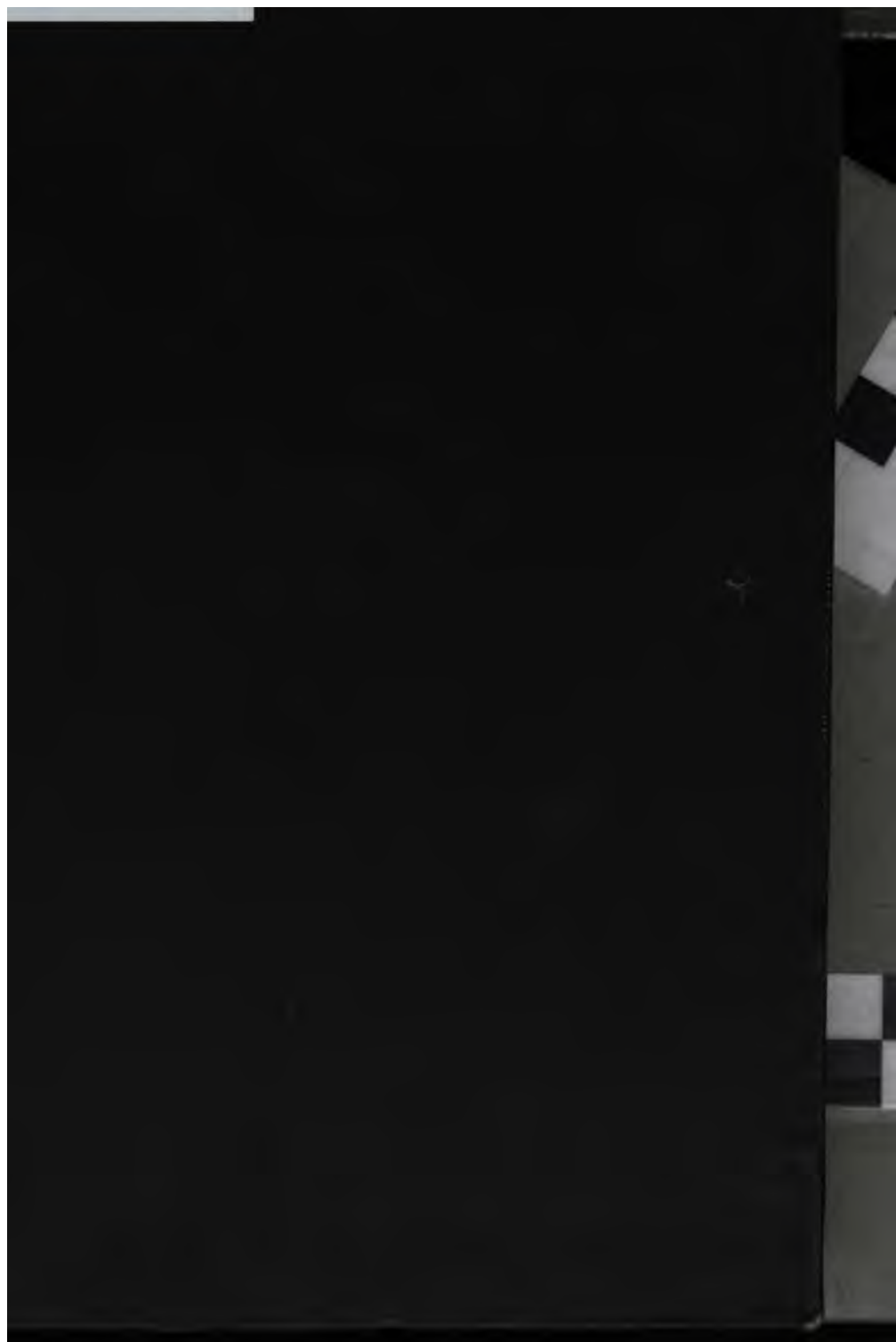
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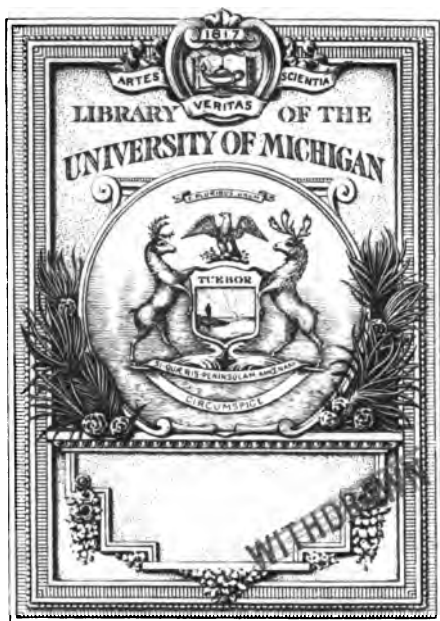
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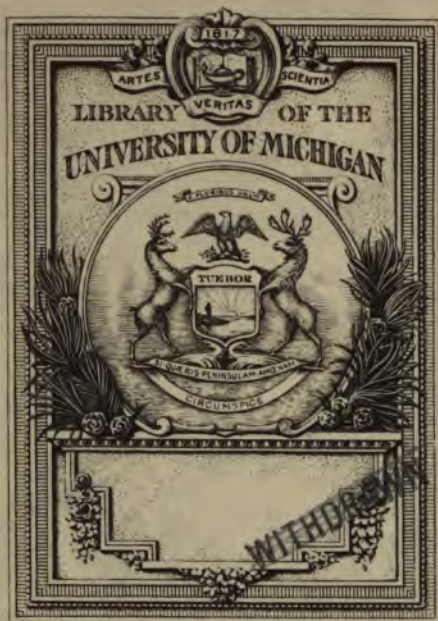
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STUDIES AND APPRECIATIONS

BY WILLIAM SHARP

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY
MRS. WILLIAM SHARP



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When I speak of Criticism I have in mind not merely the more or less deft use of commentary or indication, but one of the several ways of literature, and in itself a rare and fine art: the marriage of science that knows and of spirit that discerns. The basis of Criticism is imagination, its spiritual quality is simplicity, its intellectual distinction is balance.

WILLIAM SHARP

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The Sonnet

those of our countrymen who have devoted themselves to the special study of this fascinating poetic vehicle may be named the following : Capel Lofft, who in 1813-14 published under the title of *Laura* a valuable and interesting but very unequal and badly arranged anthology of original and translated sonnets ; R. F. Housman, who in 1833 issued a good selection, with an interesting prefatory note ; Dyce, whose small but judiciously compiled volume was a pleasant possession at a time when sonnet-literature gained but slight public attention ; Leigh Hunt, who laboured in this field genuinely *con amore* ; Charles Tomlinson, whose work on the sonnet has much of abiding value ; John Dennis, whose *English Sonnets* served as an unmistakable index to the awakening of general interest in this poetic form ; David M. Main, an accomplished student of literature and a critic possessing the true instinct, whose honour it is to have produced the most exhaustive sonnet-anthology—with quite a large volumeful of notes—in our language (for Capel Lofft's *Laura* is largely made up of Italian sonnets and translations) ; Samuel Waddington, who a year or two ago produced two pleasant little volumes of selections ; and,

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finally, Hall Caine, whose *Sonnets of Three Centuries* at once obtained the success which that ably edited compilation deserved. To all these writers, but, from the student's point of view, of course more especially to Main, the present editor is indebted, as must be every future worker in this secluded but not least beautiful section of the Garden of Poetry. There are, moreover, one or two students who have done good service in this cause without having published in book form either their opinions or any sonnet-anthology; especially among these should reference be made to the anonymous writer of two admirable papers on the sonnet in the *Quarterly Review* (1866); to the anonymous author of the thoughtful and suggestive article in the *Westminster Review* (1871); and to the anonymous contributor of the two highly interesting papers on sonnet-literature which appeared in the *Dublin Review* for 1876 and 1877; to Ashcroft Noble, a capable and discriminating critic, whose article in the *Contemporary Review* attracted considerable notice; to the late Rector of Lincoln College, Mark Pattison, who prefaced his edition of Milton's sonnets with a suggestive essay; to the late Archbishop Trench, the value of whose edition

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of Wordsworth's sonnets is heightened in the same way ; to J. Addington Symonds ; and to Theodore Watts-Dunton, whose influence in this direction is very marked. Nor should I omit to mention two charming French anthologies, *La Monographie des Sonnets* of Louis de Veyrières and *Le Livre des Sonnets* of Charles Asselineau.

The reasons for now issuing a new collection * are two : to show how much of the poetic thought of our own time has been cast in the mould of the sonnet, and how worthy that mould is of the honour ; and, by the formation of an anthology of which the first and only absolute principle is the inclusion of no sonnet that does not possess—of course in varying degree—distinct poetic value, to meet the widespread and manifestly increasing appreciation of and liking for this metrical form. Even yet no more can with justice be said than that it is limitedly popular, for not only is there still a general ignorance of what a sonnet really is and what technical qualities are essential to a fine specimen of this poetic genus, but a perfect plague of feeble productions in fourteen-lines has done its utmost, ever since Wordsworth's influence became a recognised

* See Bibliographical Note.

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factor, to render the sonnet as effete a form of metrical expression as the irregular ballad-stanza with a meaningless refrain.

Concerning every method of expression, in each of the arts, there is always a *pro* and *contra*; but few metrical forms have been more fortunate than the sonnet, for its *contras* have generally been pronounced either by persons quite ignorant of what they were discussing or incapable of appreciating any excellence save when meted out as it were by the yard. On the other hand, those who have studied it love it as the naturalist loves his microscope—and veritably, like the microscope, it discloses many beautiful things which, if embedded in some greater mass, might have been but faintly visible and incoherent. Then some of the greatest of poets have used it, not a few having selected it as the choicest mould into which to cast their most personal, their most vivid utterances: thus did Petrarca, and thus in less exclusive degree did Dante and Milton; thus Shakespeare did, and Mrs. Browning, and Wordsworth, and Rossetti, and many another true poet in our own and other lands. The stirring of the poetic impulse is very markedly at work among us at present, and there is no more

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remarkable sign of the times than the steadily growing public appreciation of the sonnet as a poetic vehicle. For one thing, its conciseness is an immense boon in these days when books multiply like gossamer-flies in a sultry June ; it is realised that if good a sonnet can speedily be read and enjoyed, that if exceptionally fine it can with ease be committed to memory, and that if bad it can be recognised as such at a glance, and can be relegated to oblivion by the turning of a single page. There is no doubt that the writer in the *Dublin Review* is correct when he regards " the increasing attention bestowed on the history and structure of the sonnet as an indication of the growth of a higher and healthier poetical taste." It may be remembered that Leigh Hunt makes a statement to the effect that the love of Italian poetry has always been greatest in England when English genius has been in its most poetical condition ; this has, as I think most will agree, been true in the past, even up to so late a date as the middle of this century, and if a renascence of this interest have a prophetic quality, then we should be on the eve of a new poetic period, for once again early Italian poetry is claiming its students and its many admirers. And

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perhaps nothing in Italian poetry is better worth study than its beautiful sonnet-literature. Whether in Italy or in England, "no form of verse," as Waddington has well remarked, "no description of poetic composition, has yielded a richer harvest than the sonnet." One can agree with this without fully endorsing Menzini's statement that the sonnet is the touchstone of great geniuses ; for it must not be overlooked that some of our truest poets, living as well as dead, are unable to write sonnets of the first class—noticeably, for instance, two such masters of verbal music as Shelley and Coleridge—nor must it for a moment be forgotten that no one form has a monopoly of the most treasurable poetic beauty, that the mould is a very secondary matter compared with the substance which renders it vital, and that a fine poem in not altogether the best form is infinitely better than a poor or feeble one in a flawless structure. As a matter of fact, poetic impulse that arises out of the suddenly kindled imagination may generally be trusted instinctively to find expression through the medium that is most fitting for it. To employ a humble simile, a poetic idea striving towards or passing into utterance is often like one of

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those little hermit-crabs which creep into whatever shell suits them the moment they are ready to leave their too circumscribed abodes. Poetry I take to be the dynamic condition of the imaginative and rhythmical faculties in combination, finding expression verbally and metrically—and the animating principle is always of necessity greater than the animated form, as the soul is superior to the body. Before entering on the subject of the technique of the sonnet, on its chief types, and on its legitimate and irregular variations, a few words may be said concerning the derivation of its name and its earliest history.

It is generally agreed that "sonnet" is an abbreviation of the Italian *sonetto*, a short strain (literally, a little sound), that word being the diminutive of *suono* = sound. The *sonetto* was originally a poem recited with sound, that is, with a musical accompaniment, a short poem of the *rispetto* kind, sung to the strains of lute or mandolin. Probably it had an existence, and possibly even its name, at a period considerably anterior to that where we first find definite mention of it, just as the irregular stanzaic form known as the ballad existed in England and Scotland prior to any generally accepted definition

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thereof. As to its first birthplace there is some uncertainty. It has been asserted to have been a native of Provence, that mother of poets, but some have it that the sonnet is an outcome of the Greek epigram. This idea is certainly not defensible, but, while it has been ridiculed as unworthy of entertainment, the scoffers seem generally to have had in mind the modern epigram, a very different thing. The essential principle of the ancient epigram was the presentment of a single idea, emotion, or fact, and in this it is entirely at one with the rival that has supplanted it—but in technique it was much simpler. It is much more likely that the *stornello* was the Italian equivalent of the sonnet—that fleeting bar of verbal melody, which in its narrow compass of two lines presents one fact of nature and one metaphorical allusion based thereon. The *stornello* stands in perhaps even closer relationship to the ancient epigram than the *rispetto* to the modern sonnet. To readers interested in the true epigram, and unacquainted with recent translations of or works thereon, I may recommend Dr. Richard Garnett's delightful little volume, *Idylls and Epigrams*, and William Watson's *Original Epigrams*, with its admirable Note.

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Housman compares the epigram and the sonnet to the well-known Grecian architectural types, the Ionic column and the Corinthian—the former a specimen of pure and graceful beauty, the latter of more elaborate but still of equally pure and graceful genius. A very far-fetched theory is that the sonnet is an Italian shadow of the ancient ode, its divisions corresponding with the strophe, antistrophe, epode, and antepode. It is not in the least likely that this may have been its origin ; it is scarcely more probable that its source may have been the ancient epigram. In all likelihood it was of Sicilian birth, gradually forming or being moulded into a certain recognised type, and apparently the outcome of the *stornelli* which every *contadino* sang as he pruned his olive-trees or tended his vines. Yet another origin has been claimed for the word, viz., that it is the French *sonnette*, and that its parentage may be primarily ascribed to the tinkling sheep-bells of Provençal days. The *stornello* is the germ of its popular allies, the *sestina rima*, *ottava rima*, and the *rispetto*. The *stornello* consists of two lines, or it may be of four, on two rhymes ; and from this metrical type issues in time the sonnet. The *sestina rima*

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is the original quatrain with an added couplet on a new rhyme ; the *ottava rima* is an expansion of the original form into six lines on two rhymes, with a concluding couplet as in the *sestina* ; in the *rispetto*, as accurately characterised by J. A. Symonds, the quatrain is doubled or prolonged indefinitely, and is followed by an additional system of one or more couplets which return or reflect upon the original theme,—the quatrain or its expansion being composed upon two rhymes, the prolongation, or return, upon two other rhymes. In the sonnet the germinal four lines have developed into two quatrains, still on two rhymes : and the prolongation invariably consists of six lines, on either two or three rhymes, with some freedom of arrangement.

Like a plant of steady growth, the seedling of the sonnet, having fallen into suitable ground somewhere about the middle of the thirteenth century, gradually forced its obscure and tortuous way towards the light. Considerably before the close of the thirteenth century we find it in fulfilled bud, in due time to open into the mature Petrarchan flower, the perfected stock whence such a multiplicity of varieties has come. Many buds did indeed arise about the same

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period, and there is still preserved at Milan (according to Muratori, in his *Perfetta Poesia*) a manuscript Latin treatise on poems in the Italian vernacular—*Poetica volgare*—written in the year 1332 by a learned and ingenious judge of Padua named Antonio di Tempo, wherein mention is made of sixteen distinct species of sonnet, most of them posterior to the unfolding of the finest and most energetic bud, but some anterior thereto. To carry on the metaphor a little further, the gardener who tended and cultivated this choice bud was a certain clerical poet known widely as Francesco Guittone d'Arezzo—not the least worthy among the illustrious little band which that small Italian town has produced. At the same time, such honour as is due must be rendered to a little-known predecessor in the art, the author of the sonnet beginning *Però ch'amore*, which, as J. A. Symonds has pointed out, is presumably the earliest extant example of this metrical structure. The poet in question was Piero delle Vigne, Secretary of State to Frederick II. of Sicily, and while his little poem differs from the typical Italian sonnet in that the rhyme-arrangement of the octave is simply that of two ordinary conjoint quatrains, or two rhymes throughout, it is a true example in

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all other particulars. Fra Guittone flourished during the greater part of the thirteenth century, and he it was who first definitely adopted and adhered to what was even then recognised as the best modern form for the expression of an isolated emotion, thought, or idea. His sonnets are not only the model of those of his great successor, Petrarca, but are also in themselves excellent productions, and especially noteworthy when considered in relation to the circumstances under which they came into existence. From the work of Guittone d'Arezzo—whom Capel Lofft called the Columbus of poetic literature, from his having discovered the sonnet even as the Genoese navigator discovered America—to that of the sweetest-voiced of all Italian poets, there is a considerable step. The period was eminently an experimental one, and in sonnet-literature as elsewhere. While the Guittonian sonnet remained the most admired model, many variations thereof and divergencies therefrom became temporarily popular, exerting an unfortunate influence by allowing free scope to slovenly or indifferent workmanship. But Petrarca and Dante laid an ineffaceable seal on the Guittonian form, not prohibiting minor variations, and even themselves

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indulging in experimental divergencies; in the hands of the one it gained an exquisite beauty, a subtle music abidingly sweet, and in those of the other a strength and vigour that supplied as it were the masculine element to the already existent feminine. Tasso and the other great Italians followed suit, and the sonnet became the favourite Italian poetic vehicle, as it remains to this day, though, alas ! but the body still lives, the soul having fled or—it may be—lying in a profound and apparently undisturbable trance. J. A. Symonds has objected that this statement can hardly be taken literally in view of the excellent poems of Stecchetti and the Verini, but, broadly speaking, it can hardly be doubted that the sonnet in Italy has fallen upon evil days when it is mostly to be found adorning young ladies' albums, or as an accompaniment to presents of flowers and confectionery. In due course Camoens in the South, Du Bellay and the early French poets in the West, and Surrey and Spenser in England, turned towards this form as birds towards a granary unroofed by the wind. Concerning Hall Caine's theory that the English sonnet is an indigenous growth, I shall have something to say later on.

It will be well to consider the sonnet in a

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threefold aspect: the aspect of Formal Excellence, that of Characteristic Excellence, and that of Ideal Excellence. By the first I refer to technique simply; by the second to individuality, expression; by the third to the union of imagination, suggestiveness, melody of word and line, and harmony of structure. The section of this essay devoted to the consideration of Formal Excellence may be comprehensively headed *Sonnet-Structure*.

Sonnet-Structure. It is a matter of surprise that even now there are many well-read people who have no other idea of what a sonnet is than that it is a short poem—what kind of short poem they very vaguely apprehend. I have heard it described as any short poem of one or more stanzas used for filling up blank spaces in magazine-pages—a definition not so very absurd when we remember that a poet and critic like Coleridge pronounced it “a medium for the expression of a mere momentary burst of passion.” But the majority of readers of poetry know that it is limited to fourteen lines in length; beyond this the knowledge of all save a comparative few does not go.

The commonest complaint against the sonnet is its supposed arbitrariness—a complaint based on a complete misconception

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of its nature. In the sense that a steersman must abide by the arbitrary law of the compass, in the sense that the engine-driver must abide by the arbitrary machinery of the engineer, in the sense that the battalion must wheel to the right or left at the arbitrary word of command—in this sense is the sonnet an arbitrary form. Those who complain seem to forget that the epic, the tragedy, the ode, are also arbitrary forms, and that it is somewhat out of place to rail against established rules of architecture in the erection of a cottage and to blink those in the building of a mansion or a palace. Any form of creative art, to survive, must conform to certain restrictions: would *Paradise Lost* hold its present rank if Milton had interspersed Cavalier and Roundhead choruses throughout his epic? What would we think of the *Æneid* if Virgil had enlivened its pages with Catullan love-songs or comic interludes after the manner of Plautus or Terence? The structure of the sonnet is arbitrary in so far as it is the outcome of continuous experiment moulded by mental and musical influences; it is not a form to be held sacred simply because this or that great poet, or a dozen poets, pronounced it to be the best possible poetic vehicle for its purpose. It has with-

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stood the severest test that any form can be put to: it has survived the changes of language, the fluctuations of taste, the growth of culture, the onward sweep and the resilience of the wave of poetry that flows to and fro, "with kingly pauses of reluctant pride," across all civilised peoples,—for close upon six hundred years have elapsed since Fra Guittone and Dante and Petrarca found the perfect instrument ready for them to play their sweetest music upon. Guittone was like the first man who adventured frequently upon the waters in a wedge-shaped craft, after whom every one agreed that grooved and narrow bows were better than the roundness of a tub or the clumsy length of a hollowed tree-trunk. Or again, he may be compared with the great Florentine painter Masaccio, who first introduced the reality of life into Italian art, or with the even greater Fleming, Jan van Eyck, who invented, or at any rate inaugurated, painting in oils as now understood.

The Guittonian limitation of the sonnet's length to fourteen lines was, we may rest assured, not wholly fortuitous. The musical and poetic instinct probably, however, determined its final form more than any apprehension of the fundamental natural law

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beneath its metrical principles. The multiplicity and easy facility of Italian rhymes rendered the more limited epigram of the ancients too malleable a metrical material in one way, and too obstinate a material in another; for, while almost any one with a quick ear and ready tongue could have rattled off a loose quatrain, it was difficult to give sufficient weight and sonority thereto with a language where rhyme-sounds are as plentiful as pebbles in a shallow mountain-stream. (It became necessary, then, to find a mould for the expression of a single thought, emotion, or poetically apprehended fact, which would allow sufficient scope for sonority of music and the unfolding of the motive and its application, and yet would not prove too ample for that which was to be put into it.) Repeated experiments tended to prove that twelve, fourteen, or sixteen lines were ample for the presentation of any isolated idea or emotion; again, that the sensitive ear was apt to find the latter number a shade too long, or cumbrous; and still later, that while a very limited number of rhymes was necessitated by the shortness of the poem, the sixteen reverberations of some three or four terminal sounds frequently became monotonous and

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unpleasing. Ten- or twelve-line poems were ascertained to be as a rule somewhat fragmentary, and worthily served only when the poet was desirous of presenting to his readers a simple pearl rather than a diamond with its flashing facets, though here also there was not enough expansion for restricted rhyme, while there was too much for merely two or at the most three distinct terminal sounds. Again, it was considered advisable that the expression should be twofold, that is, that there should be the presentation of the motive, and its application ; (hence arose the division of the fourteen-line poem into two systems.) How were these systems to be arranged ? Were seven lines to be devoted to the presentation of the idea or emotion, and seven to its application : seven to the growth of the tree, and seven to its fruitage : seven to the oncoming wave, and seven to its resurge ? The sensitive ear once more decided the question, recognising that if there were to be a break in the flow of melody—and the necessity of pauses it had already foreseen—it could not be at a seventh line, which would bring about an overbalance of rhyme. Experience and metrical music together coincided to prove that the greatest amount of dignity and beauty could be obtained by

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the main pause occurring at the end of the eighth line. Here, then, we arrive at the two systems into which the sonnet is divided—the major and the minor; and because the major system consists of eight lines, it is called the “octave,” and correspondingly the minor system is known as the “sestet.”

It soon became evident, however, that something more was wanted: it was as if a harpist had discovered that with another string or two he could greatly add to the potential powers of his instrument. This was the number and the true distribution of rhyme-sounds. How many were to occur in the octave, how many in the sestet? or were they to pervade both systems indiscriminately? Even before Dante and Petrarca wrote their sonnets it was an accepted canon that the octave lost its dignity if it contained more than two distinct rhyme-sounds, or at most three. In the sestet it was recognised that a greater freedom was allowable, if not in the number of rhyme-sounds, at least in their disposition. Again, Guittone had definitely demonstrated that in length each sonnet-line should consist of ten syllables; the decasyllabic metre permitting a far greater sonority than the octosyllabic; and that acute experimen-

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talist probably quite realised that continuous sonority and unbroken continuity of motive were two of the most essential characteristics of the sonnet. No one who has any knowledge of the laws both of musical and of poetical forms would be surprised if it were proved, as has been asserted, that Fra Guittone or his predecessors perceived and acted in accordance with the close analogy existing between their chosen metrical form and the musical system established by Guido Bonatti in the eleventh century. Throughout Fra Guittone's work it is evident that he is no blind blunderer, but a poet striving to make his vehicle the best possible, working upon it with a determinate aim.

In most of his sonnets we find the following arrangement: in the octave the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines rhyme, and so do the second, third, sixth, and seventh. By this arrangement the utmost attainable dignity and harmony is obtained, there being no clashing of rhymes, no jingle, but a steady sweeping wave-like movement entirely satisfactory to the ear. There have been some fine sonnets written with the introduction of a third rhyme-sound into the octave (the terminations of the sixth and seventh lines), and there can be no doubt that if this were

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equally satisfactory to the ear, a still greater and most valuable expansion would be given to the English sonnet; but to the sensitive ear, especially sensitive among Italians, it is as out of place as some new strain is in a melody that is already in itself amply sufficient, and that loses in effect by the alien introduction. This variation never gained ground in Italy, though in Spain it found favour with some of the Castilian sonneteers as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century.

It gained, instead of losing, in what Theodore Watts-Dunton calls the solidarity of the outflowing waves by its nominal subdivision into two *basi*, or bases, as the Italians name what we call the quatrains: upon these *basi* the poetic image could rest, either rendered clear to the reader supported on both, or appealing to him by an illuminating gleam from one base and then by an added light from the other. The octave of the perfect sonnet, then, we find to consist of two quatrains, capable of divisional pause yet forming a solid whole: in all, eight lines following a prescribed rhyme-arrangement, which may be thus expressed:

a—b—b—a—a—b—b—a

The sestet in like manner is subdivided

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equally, in this case into sections of three lines each: these sections are called *the tercets*. There can be either three rhymes or two, and the variations thereupon are numerous. The Guittonian, or, as it is generally called, the Petrarchan sestet-type, contains three distinct rhyme-sounds, and employs the valuable pause permitted by the true use of the double-tercet; but a system of two rhyme-sounds is, as far as "metrical emphasis" goes, much stronger, and any arrangement of the rhymes (whether two or three) is permissible, save that of a couplet at the close. It is a difficult question to decide even for one's self whether it is better for the sestet to contain only two rhymes or three: personally I am inclined to favour the restriction to two, on account of the great accession of metrical emphasis resulting to this restriction. The normal type, however (the Petrarchan), affords a better opportunity for a half-break at the end of the first tercet, corresponding to the same midway in the octave and to the full break at the latter's close. It would be a mistake to dogmatise upon the point, and the poet will probably instinctively use the tercets in just correspondence with his emotional impulse. The Italian masters recognised as the best that division of the sestet

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into two distinct tercets (which they termed *volte*, or turnings), which, while not interfering with what Theodore Watts-Dunton calls the ebb-movement of the sestet, is fully capable of throwing out two separate lights in one gleam—like the azure hollow and yellow flame in burning gas.

The sestet of the pure Guittonian sonnet, then, may be expressed by the following formula :

$$\underline{a-b-c : -a-b-c}$$

The following are among the more or less appropriate variations :

| | 1 | 2 | 3* | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|----------|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| viii. | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a |
| cxix. | b | b | b | b | a | a | b | b | b | b | b | b | a | a | b | b | b | a |
| ii. | a | b | b | a | b | b | c | a | c | c | c | b | b | b | a | b | c | b |
| xi. | b | a | a | b | b | a | b | c | c | b | c | c | c | c | c | c | a | b |
| cxiii. | a | a | b | b | a | a | a | b | b | c | a | c | c | b | c | a | c | c |
| cxlv. | b | b | a | a | b | b | c | c | a | a | b | a | b | c | b | b | c | c |
| xcviii. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| v. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| clxxiii. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| cxl. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| iv. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ccxii. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| xxxviii. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| lxxiii. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| xc. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The figures in the lower division of this table denote examples among the sonnets in my Anthology of the variation in question.

* Rossetti used to say that he considered this (No. 3) to be the best form of sestet, if it could be

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Of these, it seems to me that the two most musical—the least disturbant to the melodic wave—are the first and third,

$$\frac{a-b-a-b-a-b}{a-b-b-a-b-a}$$

The occurrence of a rhymed couplet at the close of the sonnet is rare indeed in Italian literature : I cannot recall a single example of it among the classic masters of the sonnet, and even in later times I fancy it would be difficult to find a single good Italian example worthy the name with this termination. But it does not necessarily follow that a closing couplet is equally unpleasant to the ear in English, for in the latter practically all sonnets are what the Italians call *mute*, that is, the rhyming terminals are in one syllable, while in the language of Petrarca and Dante they are trisyllabic and dissyllabic—a circumstance materially affecting our consideration of this much-debated point. Not only are there few good English sonnets with dissyllabic terminals (I remember none with trisyllabic throughout, and do not suppose there is an example thereof to be found), but there are few of any quality. In Mrs. achieved without any damage to intellectual substance.

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Alice Meynell's *Preludes* there are one or two partially so constructed, *e.g.*, *A Day to Come*. But notwithstanding the differences in terminal structure, it is open to question whether the rhymed couplet-ending be not almost as disagreeable to the English as to the Italian ear, unless the form be that of the so-called Shakespearean sonnet. One of the chief pleasures of the sonnet is the expectancy of the closing portion, and when the ear has become attuned to the sustained flow of the normal octave and also of the opening lines of the sestet, the couplet is apt to come upon one with an unexpected jar, as if some one had opened and banged-to a door while the musician was letting the last harmonious chords thrill under his touch. There has been a good deal written on this point, and Hall Caine and others have succinctly pointed out their reasons for strongly objecting to it. It is, moreover, perhaps the last point on which sonneteers themselves will agree. Writing elsewhere on this subject, I stated that "if the arrangement of lines suits the emotion, I am not offended by a concluding rhymed couplet, or by the quatrains used to such purpose by Shakespeare, Drayton, and Tennyson-Turner"; but then, undoubtedly, only

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one side of the question was clear to me. Continuous study of the sonnet has convinced me that, while many English sonnets of the Guittonian type, even by good writers, are markedly weakened by rhymed couplet-endings, in the Shakespearean form the closure in question is not only not objectionable, but is absolutely as much the right thing as the octave of two rhymes is for the Petrarchan sonnet. Most writers on the sonnet either state generally that they object or that they do not object to the rhymed couplets at the close: thus one anonymous critic writes that he fails "to see wherein a couplet ending is not as musical as any other arrangement, that indeed it is demonstratively so by the citation of some of the most striking sonnets in our language"—while, on the other hand, Hall Caine refers to the closure in question as being as offensive to his ear as the couplets at the ends of scenes and acts in some Shakespearean plays. It seems to me now that there are, broadly speaking, but two normal types in English of sonnet-structures—the Petrarchan and the Shakespearean: whenever a motive is cast in the mould of the former a rhymed couplet ending is, to my own ear at least, quite out of

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place ; whenever it is embodied in the latter the final couplet is eminently satisfactory.

Before, however, considering the five chief types (primarily, two), I may finish my general remarks on the early history of the sonnet.

That by the fourteenth century the mature sonnet was fully understood and recognised is evident from the facts (set forth by Mr. Tomlinson) that of the forty examples attributed (one or two of them somewhat doubtfully) to Dante, thirty-three belong to the strict Guittonian type ; of the three hundred and seventeen produced throughout a long period by Petrarca, not one has more than two rhymes in the octave, and only fifteen have any variations from the normal type (eleven in alternate rhymes, and four with the first, third, sixth, and eighth lines harmonising) ; while two hundred and ninety agree in having nothing more than a double rhyme both in the major and in the minor system—one hundred and sixteen belonging to the pure Guittonian type, one hundred and seven with the tercets in two alternate rhymes (Type 1 in foregoing table), and sixty-seven with three rhyme-sounds, arranged as in Type 7 in foregoing table.

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Again, of the eighty sonnets of Michael Angelo, seven-eighths are in the normal type. It is thus evident that, at a period when the Italian ear was specially keen to all harmonious effects, the verdict of the masters in this species of poetic composition was given in favour of two sonnet-formations—the Guittonian structure as to the octave, and the co-relative arrangement of the sestet a—b—c—a—b—c, or a—b—a—b—a—b, with a preference for the former. Another variation susceptible of very beautiful effect is that of Type 9 (*ante*), but though it can most appropriately be used when exceptional tenderness, sweetness, or special impressiveness is sought after, it does not seem to have found much favour. I may quote here in exemplification of it one of the most beautiful of all Italian sonnets. It is one of Dante's, and is filled with the breath of music as a pine-tree with the cadences of the wind—the close being supremely exquisite. It will also afford to those who are unacquainted with Italian an idea of the essential difference between the trisyllabic and dissyllabic terminals of the Southern and the one-syllable or "mute" endings of the English sonnet, and at the same time serve to illustrate what has been

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already said concerning the pauses at the quatrains and tercets :

*Tanto gentile, e tanto onesta pare
La donna mia, quand' ella altrui saluta,
Ch' ogni lingua divien tremando muta,
E gli occhi non l'ardiscon di guardare.*

*Ella sen va, sentendosi laudare,
Umilmente d' onestà vestuta ;
E par che sia una cosa venuta
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.*

*Mostrasi sì piacente a chi la mira,
Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core,
Che 'ntender non la può chi non la pruova.*

*E par, che dalla sua labbia si mova,
Uno spirito soave, pien d' amore,
Che va dicendo all' anima : sospira.*

I need not here enter into detail concerning all the variations that have been made upon the normal type ; in Italian these are very numerous, as also in French. In Germany the model type (where, by-the-by, the sonnet was first known by the name of *Klang-gedicht*, a very matter-of-fact way of rendering *sonetto* in its poetic sense !) has always been the Petrarchan, as exemplified in the flawless statuesque sonnets of Platen. The following six Italian variations repre-

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sent those most worthy of notice : (1) *Versi sdruccioli*, twelve-syllabled lines, *i.e.* (*Leigh Hunt*), slippery or sliding verses, so called on account of their terminating in dactyls—*těněřě—Věněřě*. (2) Caudated, or Tailed Sonnets—*i.e.*, sonnets to which as it were an unexpected augmentation of two or five or more lines is made : an English example of which will be found in any edition of Milton's works, under the title, *On the New Forcers of Conscience*. (3) Mute Sonnets : on one-syllable terminals, but generally used only for satirical and humorous purposes—in the same way as we, contrariwise, select dissyllabic terminals as best suited for badinage. (4) Linked, or Interlaced Sonnets, corresponding to the Spenserian form, which will be formulated shortly. (5) The Continuous or Iterating Sonnet, on one rhyme throughout, and (6) the same, on two rhymes throughout. French poets (who, speaking generally, are seen to less advantage in the sonnet than in any other poetic vehicle) have delighted in much experimentalising : their only commendable deviation, one commonly made, is a commencement of the sestet with a rhymed couplet (a mould into which Mr. Swinburne is fond of casting his impulsive speech)—

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but their octosyllabic and dialogue sonnets, and other divergencies, are nothing more than experiments, more or less interesting and able. The paring-down system has reached its extreme level in the following clever piece of trifling by Comte Paul de Resseguier—a “sonnet” of single-syllable lines :

EPITAPHE D'UNE JEUNE FILLE

Fort
Belle,
Elle
Dort !

Sort
Frñle
Quelle
Mort !

Rose
Close—
La

Brise
L'a
Prise.

Among English sonnets the chief variations are the rhymed-couplet ending added to the preceding twelve-line cast in the regular form : the sonnet ending with an Alexandrine : the sonnet with an Alexandrine closing both octave and sestet : the assonantal sonnet, *i.e.*, a sonnet without rhymes, but

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with the vowel sounds of the words so arranged as to produce a distinctly harmonious effect almost identical with that of rhyme-music. Of this form Mr. Wilfred Blunt, among others, has given a good example in his *Love-Sonnets of Proteus*: the octosyllabic sonnets (mere experiments), written by E. Cracroft Lefroy and Samuel Waddington and others: and the sonnet constructed on two rhyme-sounds throughout. Among the last-named I may mention William Bell Scott's *Garland for Advancing Years*, Edmund Gosse's *Pipe-Player*, and Lord Hanmer's *Winter*. The latter I may quote as a fine but little-known example of this experimental variation:

WINTER

To the short days, and the great vault of shade,
The whitener of the hills, we come—alas,
There is no colour in the faded grass,
Save the thick frost on its hoar stems arrayed.
Cold is it: as a melancholy maid,
The latest of the seasons now doth pass,
With a dead garland, in her icy glass
Setting its spikes about her crisped braid.
The streams shall breathe, along the orchards laid,
In the soft spring-time; and the frozen mass
Melt from the snowdrift; flowerets where it was
Shoot up—the cuckoo shall delight the glade;
But to new glooms through some obscure crevasse
She will have past—that melancholy maid.

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This interesting and poetic experiment would have been still better but for the musical flaw in the first line (*days—shade*) and those in the thirteenth - fourteenth (*crevasse—past*), though of course in this instance the repetition of *maid* as a terminal is intentional, and is a metrical gain rather than a flaw. Dialogue-sonnets are not an English variation : I am aware of very few in our language,—the earliest which I have met with is that written by Alexander, Earl of Stirling (1580-1640). There are one or two sonnets in French with octaves where the first *three* lines rhyme, and therewith also the fifth, sixth, and seventh : and one, in English, *The Chorister*, by J. A. Symonds.

We may now consider the five standard formal types, and thereby close the first section of this Introduction, that on "Sonnet-structure."

These formal types are: (1) The Petrarchan; (2) the Spenserian; (3) the Shakespearean; (4) the Miltonic; and (5) the Contemporary.

The Guittonian, or Petrarchan, sonnet has already been explained from the structural point of view, but its formal characteristics may be summarised once more. (1) It, like all sonnets, must primarily consist of four-

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teen decasyllabic lines. (2) It must be made up of a major and minor system : the major system consisting of eight lines, or two quatrains, to be known as the octave ; the minor, consisting of six lines, or two tercets, to be known as the sestet. (3) Two rhyme-sounds only must pervade the octave, and their arrangement (nominally arbitrary, but in reality based on an ascertainable melodic law) must be so that the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth terminals rhyme, while the second, third, sixth, and seventh do so also on a different note. (4) What generally is looked upon as completing the normal type is a sestet with the tercet divisions clearly marked, and employing three rhyme-sounds, the co-relatives being the terminals of lines 1 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 6.

The first English sonnets were composed by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (c. 1517-1547) ; and the first appearance of any in book form was in the rare publication briefly known as *Tottel's Miscellany*, whose full title is *Songs and Sonettes written by the ryght honourable lorde Henry Howard late earle of Surrey, and other*. These accomplished young noblemen had resided in Italy, and, themselves delighting in Italian poetic literature

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—especially Petrarca's work—hastened, on their return to their own country, to acclimatise the new poetic vehicle which had become so famous in the hands of two of Italy's greatest writers. Their efforts, with a new and difficult medium and a language which was still only approaching the state in which Spenser and Marlowe and Shakespeare found it, were only very partially successful, and, as we now know, their sonnets owed most of what was excellent in them to Italian sources. The remarkable thing about them is that they all end with rhymed couplets, an arrangement distinctly opposed to any with which they were acquainted in another language. On the other hand, it must be noted (this point should be remembered a little later when we come to discuss Hall Caine's theory) that Wyatt's are otherwise mostly on the Italian model. Surrey, again; evidently found his task over-difficult of satisfactory performance, and so constantly experimented with a fourteen-line sonnet-mould—like a musician who, arriving in his own land, finds his countrymen's ears not easily attuned to the melodies of the new instrument he brings with him from abroad; and so tries again and again to find some way of making his novel mandolin- or lute-sounds

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attractive to ears accustomed to the harsher strains of fife or bagpipe. Thus we find him composing on the two-rhyme-throughout system ; linking the three elegiac quatrains and a couplet, and otherwise feeling his way—evidently coming ultimately to the conclusion that the three quatrains and the couplet constituted the form best suited to the English language. This may concisely be set forth in the following formula :

a—b—b c—d—d e—f—f g—g

A much more original and more potent poetic nature next endeavoured to find meet expression in the sonnet. Spenser, that great metricist and genuine poet, notwithstanding all his power in verse, was unable to acclimatise the new vehicle, the importance and beauty of which he undoubtedly fully recognised. Having tried the effect of a fourteen-line poem in well-modulated blank verse, he found that he was dissatisfied with the result ; equally dissatisfied was he with the quatrains-and-couplet mould of Wyatt and Surrey ; and so at last, after continuous experiments, he produced a modification of both the English and the Italian form, retaining something of the rhyme-iteration of the latter along with the couplet-ending

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of the former ; or perhaps he simply adopted this structure from a similar Italian experiment, discerning through translation its seeming appropriateness. That he considered this the best possible mould of the sonnet for the English poet is evident from the fact that in this structure he composed his famous love sonnets, the *Amoretti*. The Spenserian sonnet may be regarded as representing that transitional stage of development which a tropical plant experiences when introduced into a temperate clime. In this case the actual graft proved short-lived, but the lesson was not lost upon cultivators, in whose hands manifold seed lay ready for germination. Spenser's method was to interlace the quatrains by using the last rhyme-sound of each as the keynote of the next— b^2 , for example, if I may use a musical comparison, constituting the dominant of b^3 and b^5 , as of course c^2 of c^3 and c^5 —and then to clinch those by an independent rhyme-couplet. It will more easily be understood by this formula :

$$\begin{array}{c} a-b-a-b \\ \hline b-c-b-c \\ \hline c-d-c-d \\ \hline e-e \end{array}$$

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But this form pleased the ear neither of his contemporaries nor of his successors : it was suited for gentle tenderness, for a lover's half-assumed languor—but in it neither Dante on the one hand nor Shakespeare nor Milton on the other would have found that rhythmical freedom, or rather that amplitude in confinement, which they obtained in the structures they adopted. After Spenser there set in the flood of Elizabethan sonneteering, which culminated in the Shakespearean sonnets. Before mentioning Shakespeare and his immediate forerunners, however, an interesting feature should be noted. This is a fine sonnet foreshadowing what is now called the Miltonic mould, by that great Englishman Sir Walter Raleigh : though structurally of the Surrey type, it has the Miltonic characteristic of unbroken continuity between octave and sestet. It may be added that the author of *Paradise Lost* modelled his well-known lines to his dead wife on this sonnet by Raleigh.

What is styled the Shakespearean sonnet is so called only out of deference to the great poet who made such noble use of it—in the same way as Petrarca is accredited with the structural form bearing his name. As

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"the sweete laureate of Italie" had predecessors in Guittone d'Arezzo and Amalricchi, so Shakespeare found that the English sonnet—as it should be called—having been inefficiently handled by Surrey, discarded by Spenser, taken up and beautified by Sir Philip Sidney (who seemed unable to definitely decide as to what form to adopt), was at last made thoroughly ready for his use by Daniel and Drayton. To show how the so-called Shakespearean sonnet was led up to, and how it actually existed in its maturity prior to the splendid poems of the young player-poet, a sonnet by each of these admirable writers may be quoted. But previous thereto it may again be made clear that the English or Shakespearean sonnet is distinctly different from the normal Italian type. Unlike the latter, it is not divided into two systems—though a pause corresponding to that enforced by the separation of octave and sestet is very frequently observed. Instead of having octave and sestet, the Shakespearean sonnet is made up of four elegiac quatrains clinched by a rhymed couplet with a new sound; and, generally, it presents the motive as it were in a transparent sphere, instead of as a cameo with two sides. As regards swiftness of motion,

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its gain upon the Spenserian, to which it is so closely allied, is great.

Referring, in a chapter dealing with the sonnets of Rossetti, to the two archetypal forms, I wrote some four years ago that "the Shakespearean sonnet is like a red-hot bar being moulded upon a forge, till—in the closing couplet—it receives the final clinching blow from the heavy hammer: while the Petrarchan, on the other hand, is like a wind gathering in volume and dying away again immediately on attaining a culminating force." The anterior simile is the happier; for the second I should now be inclined to substitute: the Petrarchan sonnet is like an oratorio, where the musical divisions are distinct, and where the close is a grand swell, the culmination of the foregoing harmonies. Petrarca himself, in one of his numerous marginalia to his sonnets, remarks that the end should invariably be more harmonious than the beginning, *i.e.*, should be *dominantly borne-in* upon the reader.

In selecting the *Sleep* of Samuel Daniel, I do so not because it is in the true Shakespearean type (as in Drayton's)—though he wrote mostly in the latter mould—but because in this example is shown the final

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transition from an octave of two rhymes to the English archetype as already formulated. It must not be overlooked, however, that he used and used well the Shakespearean form :

TO SLEEP

*Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light ;
With dark forgetting of my care return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth ;
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow ;
Never let rising Sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow ;
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.*

The sonnet by Michael Drayton which I shall next quote is not only the finest of Elizabethan sonnets by writers other than Shakespeare, but in condensed passion is equalled by only one or two of those of the great master, and is surpassed by none, either of his or of any later poet :

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A PARTING

*Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,—
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me ;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free :
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,—
Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover !*

But it was in Shakespeare's hands that this form of sonnet first became immutably established in our literature. These magnificent poems—magnificent notwithstanding many minor flaws—must always hold their high place, not only as the personal record of the greatest of our poets, but for the sake of their own consummate beauty and intellectual force. I may repeat the words I wrote in the Introductory Essay to my edition of his *Songs and Sonnets*: "It is because this great master over the passions and follies and heroisms of man has at least once dropped the veil of impersonality that we are so fascinated by the Sonnets. Here

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the musician who has otherwise played for all generations of humanity, pipes a solitary tune of his own life, its love, its devotion, its fervour, its prophetic exaltation, its passion, its despair, its exceeding bitterness. Veritably we are here face to face with 'a splendour amid glooms.' "

Rossetti, the greatest master of sonnet-music posterior to the "starre of poets," declared while expressing his unbounded admiration for Shakespeare's sonnets that "conception—*fundamental brain-work*—is what makes the difference in all art. . . . A Shakespearean sonnet is better than the most perfect in form because Shakespeare wrote it." Again, the opinion of so acute a critic and genuine a poet as Theodore Watts-Dunton may here be appropriately quoted : "The quest of the Shakespearean form is not," he writes in his article on *The Sonnet* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "like that of the sonnet of octave and sestet sonority, and, so to speak, metrical counterpoint, but sweetness ; and the sweetest of all possible arrangements in English versification is a succession of decasyllabic quatrains in alternate rhymes knit together, and clinched by a couplet—a couplet coming not too far from the initial verse, so as to lose

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its binding power, and yet not so near the initial verse that the ring of epigram disturbs 'the linked sweetness long drawn out' of this movement, but sufficiently near to shed its influence over the poem back to the initial verse." This is admirably expressed, and true so far as it goes; but to a far wider scope than "sweetness" does the Shakespearean sonnet reach. Having already given a good example of sonnets cast in this mould, it is not necessary to quote another by the chief master of the English sonnet; still I may give one of the latter's greatest, perhaps *the* greatest of Shakespeare's or any other, which will not only serve as a supreme example of the type, but will demonstrate a capability of impressiveness unsurpassed by any sonnet of Dante or Milton:

*The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.*

A
B
A
B
C
D
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L
M
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O
P
Q
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S
T
U
V
W
X
Y
Z

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*All this the world well knows ; yet none knows
well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this
hell.*

Between the sonnets of Shakespeare and those of Milton there is not much to chronicle concerning the history of the sonnet. Its chief intermediate composer was Drummond of Hawthornden, a graceful poet, but assuredly not the master he has again and again been represented to be. His essential weakness may be seen in his inability to adopt any pure mould: his sonnets may either be regarded as English bastards of Italian parentage, or as Italian refugees disguised in a semi-insular costume. Hitherto, and this notwithstanding several noble examples by Shakespeare of a more impersonal scope, most English sonnets were amatory—amatory to such an extent indeed that “sugred sonettes” became as much the stereotyped medium of lovers’ prayers and complaints as was the Border-ballad that of the virile energies of a semi-civilised people. In this state they still were after the close of the Elizabethan period—indeed they were, with the minor poets, fast degenerating into florid and insipid imbecilities. But when Milton recognised the form as one

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well suited even for the voice which was in due time to chant the rebellion of the Prince of Evil, he took it up to regenerate it. In his hands it "became a trumpet." Recognising the rhythmical beauty of the normal Italian type, he adopted its rhyme-arrangement, discarding both the English sonnet and all bastard intermediates; but, either from imperfect acquaintance with or understanding of the Italian archetype (which seems improbable, considering the circumstances of his life and the breadth of his culture), or out of definite intention, he did not regard as essential or appropriate the break in the melody between octave and sestet. And here, according to Mark Pattison, he "missed the very end and aim of the Petrarchan scheme." He considered—so we may infer—that the English sonnet should be like a revolving sphere, every portion becoming continuously visible, with no break in the continuity of thought or expression anywhere apparent. Sir Henry Taylor describes this characteristic well as the absence of point in the evolution of the idea. I need not quote one of these "soul-animating strains," as Wordsworth sympathetically styled Milton's sonnets, so familiar as they are to all lovers of English poetry;

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but I may point to an admirable sonnet in the Miltonic mould in which readers may examine with advantage—viz., the impressive *Democracy Downtrodden* of William Michael Rossetti.

A second reference may here appropriately be made to Hall Caine's claim for the inherent independence of the English sonnet. This writer is so accomplished and generally so acute a critic that I differ from him only after the most careful consideration of his arguments. To the independent existence of the English sonnet as such I am, of course, as will have been seen, no opponent ; but there is a difference between a poetic form being national and its being indigenous. An English skate, for example, is at once recognisable from that of any other Northern country, has, in a word, the seal of nationality impressed on its familiar aspect : but every one knows that originally that delightful means towards "ice-flight" came to us from the Dutch, and was not the invention of our countrymen. So is it with the national sonnet. Wyatt and Surrey did not invent the English form of sonnet, they introduced it from Italy ; Spenser played with and altered it ; Shakespeare as it were translated it into our literature ; Drummond—half

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Italian, half English, critically regarded—used it variously; the Elizabethan sonneteers piped through it their real or imaginary amatory woes; and at last came Milton; and made it shine newly, as if he had cut his diamond in such a way that only one luminous light were visible to us. The Shakespearean or English sonnet is no bastard form, nor is the Miltonic; each is derivative, one more so than the other to all appearance,—and the only bastard forms are those which do not belong to the pure types; those sonnets, for instance, which have the octave regular and a sestet consisting of a quatrain and a couplet, or those which, like the *Love-Sonnets of Proteus*, are irregular throughout. Hall Caine was desirous to remove the charge of illegitimacy against the English sonnet: where I differ from him is only that I can see no real basis for bringing up the charge against the pure types at all.

What is known as the Contemporary, and sometimes as the Natural, sonnet was first formulated by Theodore Watts-Dunton. With the keen insight that characterises his critical work and no less gives point to his imaginative faculty, this writer recognised not only the absolute metrical

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beauty of the Petrarchan type, but also that it was based on a deep melodic law, the law which may be observed in the flow and ebb of a wave ; and, indeed, the sonnet in question was composed at a little seaside village in Kent, while the writer and a friend were basking on the shore. It was he who first explained the reason why the separate and complete solidarity of the octave was so essential to perfect harmony, finding in this metrical arrangement nothing less than the action of the same law that is manifested in the inflowing wave solidly gathering into curving volume, culminating in one great pause, and then sweeping out again from the shore. This is not only a fine conception, but it was accepted at once by Rossetti, J. A. Symonds, Mark Pattison, Hall Caine, Karl Lentzner (in his treatise on the sonnet), and by others who have given special attention to this form of verse. "The striking metaphorical symbol," says J. A. Symonds, "drawn by Mr. Theodore Watts from the observation of the swelling and declining wave can even, in some examples, be applied to sonnets on the Shakespearean model ; for, as a wave may fall gradually or abruptly, so the sonnet may sink with stately volume

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or with precipitate subsidence to its close." In France the revival of the sonnet has been only less marked than in England, and among French poets it is also now recognised as indubitable that the octave must be in the normal mould, and that the sestet should have no more doubtful variation than a commencing couplet. Theodore Watts-Dunton's theory naturally excited much comment; and his sonnet on the Sonnet, wherein that theory was first formulated, may be appropriately quoted here.

THE SONNET'S VOICE

(A METRICAL LESSON BY THE SEASHORE)

*Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach
Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear.
The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear
A restless lore like that the billows teach;
For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach
From its own depths, and rest within you, dear,
As, through the billowy voices yearning here
Great nature strives to find a human speech.*

*A sonnet is a wave of melody:
From heaving waters of the impassioned soul
A billow of tidal music one and whole
Flows in the "octave"; then returning free,
Its ebbing surges in the "sestet" roll
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.*

At the same time he is no mere formalist, and has himself expressed his conviction

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(both in the *Athenaeum* and in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) that the same form is not always the best for every subject. I, for my part, think that, broadly speaking, the Contemporary Sonnet, as formulated by Watts-Dunton, may be regarded in a dual light. When it is a love-sonnet, or the emotion is tender rather than forceful, the music sweet rather than dignified, it will be found to correspond to the law of *flow* and *ebb*—i.e., of the inflowing solid wave (the octave), the pause, and then the broken resilient wash of the wave (the sestet). When, on the other hand, it is intellectually or passionately forceful rather than tender or pathetic, dignified and with impressive amplitude of imagery rather than strictly beautiful, then it will correspond to the law of *ebb* and *flow*—i.e., of the steady resilient wave-wash till the culminating moment when the billow has curved and is about to pour shoreward again (the octave), and of the solid inflowing wave, sweeping strongly forward (the sestet)—in Keats' words :

*Swelling loudly
Up to its climax, and then dying proudly.*

It is thus evident that the Contemporary type is no variation from the Petrarchan, but

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is simply an artistically understood development thereof.

Readers will already have gathered that there can thus only be three genuine sonnet-types :

THE PETRARCAN OR NATURAL SONNET (comprehending the Contemporary).

THE ENGLISH OR SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET.

THE MILTONIC SONNET (any Sonnet, whether in the Petrarcian or Shakespearean mould, with unbroken continuity, metrically and otherwise, in its presentation).

In the wide scope thus afforded no poet can with justice complain of too rigid limitations : such objection-making must simply be an exemplification of the well-known saying as to the workman and his tools. To these moreover may be addressed Capel Lofft's words (who, however, adapted them from Menzini)—“ No Procrustes has obliged you to be lopped to the measure of this bed : Parnassus will not be in ruins even if you should not publish a sonnet.”

I will not here attempt any adequate survey of the history of the sonnet in England from Milton to the present day. A cursory glance must be sufficient.

With Milton the Italian influence in our

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literature waned, and that of France (inaugurated by Dryden) took its place. A corresponding change in the poetic temperament rapidly took place.

After Milton the sonnet almost languished out of existence in this country. Many years after the great Puritan poet was laid in his grave, Gray wrote an often-praised (but to me, I must confess, a very indifferent) sonnet on the death of *Mr. Richard West*, and Mason and Warton several of fair quality. Cowper (who died, as may be remembered, in the last year of the eighteenth century) wrote one fine poem of this class to Mary Unwin. Gradually the sonnet began to awake from its poetic hibernation, and though one or two women writers not altogether unworthily handled it, and though William Roscoe and Egerton Brydges even used it with moderate success, the first real breath of spring came in the mild advent of William Lisle Bowles. His sonnets move us now hardly at all, but when we remember the season of their production we may well regard them with more kindly liberality. Bowles was born just eight years before William Wordsworth, to whom, more than any one else, is due the great revival and increasing study and appreciation of the

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sonnet. Coleridge wrote no fine sonnets, though he just missed writing one which is of supreme excellence. Blanco White concentrated all his poetic powers in one great effort, and wrote a sonnet which will live as long as the language—as in French literature Félix Arvers will be remembered always for his unique example, that beautiful sonnet commencing "*Mon âme a son secret, ma vie a son mystère.*" Leigh Hunt, true poet in his degree as he was, did truer service by his admirable efforts in critical literature towards the popularisation of the sonnet; and after him (by "after" reference is made to birth-sequence) came a constantly increasing number, the chief of whom will be found represented in my Anthology—among the most important being Sir Aubrey de Vere, little known, but a true poet and a fine sonneteer; Byron (who wrote some half-dozen compositions of this class, and wrote them well too, notwithstanding his real or pretended dislike of the form); Barry Cornwall; Shelley (whose *Ozymandias* is a fine poem but not a fine sonnet); and Keats. Though Keats has never been and probably never will be a really popular poet, his influence on other poets and on poetic temperaments generally has been

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quite incalculable. Some of his sonnets are remarkable for their power and beauty, while others are indifferent and a few are poor. With all his love for the beauty of isolated poetic lines—music condensed into an epigram more concise than the Greeks ever uttered—as, for example, his own splendid verse

There is a budding morrow in mid-night—

and with all that sense of verbal melody which he manifested so remarkably in his odes, it is strange that in his sonnets he should so often be at fault in true harmony. Even the beautiful examples which I have chosen for my Anthology afford instances of this: as in *Ailsa Rock*, where the penultimate word of the ninth line and the penultimate word of the tenth (not forming part of the rhyme sound, the two terminals indeed being antagonistic) are identical; as in the *Elgin Marbles*, where "*weak*" midway in the first line has an unpleasing assonantal relation with "*sleep*," the terminal of the second line; as in *To Homer*, where after the beautiful eleventh line already quoted, ending in "*mid-night*," there succeeds "*sight*" midway in the twelfth. These are genuine discords, and those who are unable to perceive them

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simply prove their deficiency in ear. Born a year later than Keats, Hartley Coleridge, the poetic son of a greater father, finely fulfilled the impulse that had come to him from Wordsworth, making an abiding name for himself through his sonnet-work alone. His *Birth of Speech*—as I have styled one of his best-known but unnamed sonnets—is a fine example of a sonnet in the Miltonic mould. Thomas Hood, that true poet—so little understood by the public generally—not only wrote some fine sonnets, but wrote two of special excellence, one of them (*Silence*) taking a place in the very front rank. Ten years younger than Hood was Charles Tennyson-Turner. Charming, even permanently beautiful as many of his sonnet-stanzas are, their form cannot be admired: if we have been correct in considering the so-called pure types to be the true expression of certain metrical laws, then certainly these compositions of his are not sonnets, but only (to repeat Ashcroft Noble's appropriate term for similar productions) sonnet-stanzas. The rhythm is much broken up, and the charm of assured expectancy is destroyed. But a greater poet than Tennyson-Turner, true singer as the latter was, came into the world about

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the same time. No more impassioned soul ever found expression in rhythmical speech than Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and there is nothing in her poetry which is finer than that famous love-record, the so-called *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Impetuous as was her genius, hasty and frequently careless as she was in production, she never found the archetypal sonnet too circumscribed for her. The pathetic beauty, the fascinating personality, the pure poetry displayed in these sonnets, have touched many and many a heart since the tired singer was laid to rest under the cypresses not far from that beloved river whose flow she had so often followed in thought down to the far-off Pisan sea. Only those who have thoroughly studied contemporary poetry, and not only the poetry which is familiar to many, but that also which is quite unknown and by minor writers of no reputation or likelihood of reputation, can realise the potency of Mrs. Browning's influence, especially among women. Even to mention by name all those who have charmed, or interested, or transiently attracted us by their sonnets throughout the last fifty years would take up much more space than I have to spare, nor can I even refer in detail

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to those who are no longer with us. One name, however, stands out from all others since Wordsworth and Mrs. Browning, like a pine-tree out of a number of graceful larches. Dante Gabriel Rossetti is not only one of the great poets of the century, but the one English poet whose sonnet-work can genuinely be weighed in the balance with that of Shakespeare and with that of Wordsworth. No influence is at present more marked than his: its stream is narrower than that of Tennyson and Browning, but the current is deep, and its fertilising waters have penetrated far and wide into the soil. The author of *The House of Life* thus holds a remarkable place in the literary and artistic history of the second Victorian epoch. No critic of this poet's work will have any true grasp of it who does not recognise that "Rossetti" signifies something of greater import than the beautiful productions of one man; the historian of the brilliant period in question will work in the dark if he is unable to perceive one of the chief well-springs of the flood, if he should fail to recognise the relationship between certain radical characteristics of the time and the man who did so much to inaugurate or embody them.

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Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti. Italy herself cannot present a finer body of pure poetry in the mould of this form than is to be found in the collective sonnets of these great English writers. As to the vexed question of priority among these sonneteers, I need not attempt to gauge the drift of capable opinion. For myself—and this I set forward the less reluctantly as I know the opinion is shared by so many better judges than I claim to be—I would simply say: (1) that the three greatest sonneteers of our language seem to me to be Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Rossetti; (2) that the two greatest, regarding their work *en masse* and not by this or that sonnet, or this or that group of sonnets, seem to me to be Shakespeare and Rossetti; and (3) that no poet of our own or any language could show ten sonnets equal in breadth of thought, verity of poetry, and beauty of expression to the ten greatest of Wordsworth's. In "fundamental brain-work," to use Rossetti's phrase, or in the composition of "deep-brained sonnettes," to quote Shakespeare's, these two poets stand above Wordsworth; but in impersonal humanity Shakespeare rarely, Rossetti a little less rarely, approaches the highest reach

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of one who in general is their poetic inferior. For what great poet at his poorest is so poor as Wordsworth : in what other great poetic nature has there ever been so abundant a leaven of the prosaic ? One of the chief poets in our country, his garden has more desert-spaces in it than any other, and the supreme beauties are almost lost to all who have no guide to the labyrinth. But these super-excellent treasures, when once found, how we are carried away by their exquisite perfume, their extreme beauty ! We forget the sand and the many weeds, and for a time believe that in no other of the many gardens of verse blooms there such loveliness, breathes there such fragrance. But in one thing Rossetti is greater than Wordsworth, greater even than Shakespeare, and that is in weight and volume of sound. As a wind-swayed pine seems literally to shake off music from its quivering branches, so do his sonnets throb with and disperse deep-sounding harmonies. What sonority of pure poetic speech there is in this from *The Dark Glass* :

*Not I myself know all my love for thee :
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday ?
Shall birth and death and all dark names that be*

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*As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with
spray ;
And shall my sense pierce love,—the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity ?*

or in this from *Lovesight* :

*O love, my love ! If I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening
slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing ?*

How transcendently Shakespearean this
beautiful opening of the sestet of the sonnet
True Woman—her Heaven :

*The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
Like any hillflower ; and the noblest troth
Dies here to dust !*

A poem does not require to be an epic
to be great, any more than a man need be
a giant to be noble. When a fine thing is
adequately and completely stated, it does
not gain by being embedded in an environ-
ment too great for it, like an amethyst
in a great boulder of quartz. In the words
of an early sonnet commentator—"like the
small statue by the chisel of Lysippus, they

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demonstrate that the *idea of greatness* may be excited independently of the magnitude of size." Look at the majesty of this imagery :

*Even as, heavy-curved,
Stooping against the wind, a charioteer
Is snatched from out his chariot by the hair,
So shall Time be ; and as the void car, hurled
Abroad by reinless steeds, even so the world :
Yea, even as chariot-dust upon the air,
It shall be sought and not found anywhere :*

or at the amplitude of that magnificent sonnet, Aubrey de Vere's *The Sun-God* ; or at the spaciousness of that of Wilfred Scawen Blunt entitled *The Sublime*.

When it is fully realised that a sonnet must be the complete development of a single motive, and that it must at once be reticent and ample, it will be understood how true is that line of Boileau : "*Un sonnet sans défaut vaut seul un long poème.*" Sonnets are like waves of the sea, each on a small scale that which the ocean is on a large. "A sonnet is a moment's monument," wrote Rossetti, in one of his own compositions—not improbably unconsciously reproducing that line of de Musset, in his "*Impromptu en réponse à cette question : 'Qu'est-ce que la poésie ?'*"—*Eterniser peut-*

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être un rêve d'un instant." It is to indulge in no mere metaphysical subtlety to say that life can be as ample in one divine moment as in an hour, or a day, or a year. And there is a wide world of sensation open to the sonneteer if he will but exercise not only a wise reticence, but also vivid perception and acute judgment. As the writer in the *Quarterly Review* has well said, "the sonnet might almost be called the alphabet of the human heart, since almost every kind of emotion has been expressed, or attempted to be expressed, in it." And in this, more than in any other poetic form, it is well for the would-be composer to study, not only every line and every word, but every vowel and every part of each word, endeavouring to obtain the most fit phrase, the most beautiful and original turn to the expression—to be, like Keats, "misers of sound and syllable." Moreover, in no form is revision more advisable: in none is it less likely to be harmful, for a sonnet is pre-eminently a form embodying emotion remembered in tranquillity, as Wordsworth defined poetry generally. We know that Petrarca has himself recorded how he passed the file athwart his handiwork over and over again, and but rarely, even

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then, saw the gem leave his cabinet without reluctance—how he wrote not hurriedly, and issued with still greater circumspection; letting each sonnet, as Leigh Hunt expresses it, lie polishing in his mind for months together, like a pebble on the sea-shore. And not less enamoured of perfection for perfection's sake was the greatest sonneteer of our own time, every one of whose sonnets was passed again and again through the white heat of imaginative and critical comparative study: in Rossetti's own words, the first and highest quality of finish in poetic execution, "is that where the work has been all mentally 'cartooned,' as it were, beforehand, by a process intensely conscious, but patient and silent—an occult evolution of life."

Some score or more of essential rules might well be formulated for the behoof, not only of those who wish to write in the sonnet-form, but also of those who do not even yet fully realise how many things go to the making of a really good sonnet. These regulations, major and minor, are to be found fully set forth by Leigh Hunt and also by Mark Pattison, but a complete statement of points to be observed is here now unnecessary. It will suffice if I set

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forth the ten absolutely essential rules for a good sonnet :

- I. The sonnet must consist of fourteen decasyllabic lines.
- II. Its octave, or major system, whether or not this be marked by a pause in the cadence after the eighth line, must (unless cast in the Shakespearean mould) follow a prescribed arrangement in the rhyme-sounds—namely, the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines must rhyme on the same sound, and the second, third, sixth, and seventh on another.
- III. Its sestet, or minor system, may be arranged with more freedom, but a rhymed couplet at the close is *only* allowable when the form is the English or Shakespearean.
- IV. No terminal should also occur in any portion of any other line in the same system ; and (1) the rhyme-sounds of the octave should be harmoniously at variance, and (2) the rhyme-sounds of the sestet should be entirely distinct in intonation from those of the octave. Thus (1) no octave should be based on a monotonous system of nominally distinct rhymes, such as *sea—futuraity—eternity—be—flee—adversity—inevitably—free*.
- V. It must have no slovenliness of diction, no weak or indeterminate terminations, no vagueness of conception, and no obscurity.

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- VI. It must be absolutely complete in itself—*i.e.*, it must be the evolution of *one* thought, or *one* emotion, or *one* poetically apprehended fact.
- VII. It should have the characteristic of apparent inevitableness, and in expression be ample, yet reticent. It must not be forgotten that dignity and repose are essential qualities of a true sonnet.
- VIII. The continuity of the thought, idea, or emotion must be unbroken throughout.
- IX. Continuous sonority must be maintained from the first phrase to the last.
- X. The end must be more impressive than the commencement—the close must not be inferior to, but must rather transcend what has gone before.

If these rules are adequately fulfilled, there will be every chance of the sonnet proving a super-excellent one. But there must be no mere music, no mere sonority, no fourteen-line descriptions of aspects of nature in the manner of Wordsworth in his Duddon-sonnets, for example. Beneath the intermingling lights of apt simile and imaginative metaphor, beneath the melody of vowels and words melting into the melody of the line, and the harmony of the due proportion of the lines themselves from first to last, there must lie, clear and undisturbed by its environment, the

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dominating motive—the idea, the thought, the emotion.

But after all these remarks upon technicalities—after all this talk about octaves and sestets, vowels and consonants, I must not let the reader suppose that such matters form anything more than the mere scaffolding of poetry. Whether in sonnet-form or in any other guise, “poetry must always,” as has been said by a writer often quoted in this essay, “reflect the life of Nature or the life of Man, else it is nothing worth.”

I write these last words not far from the sombre shadow of Ben Ledi—the Hill of God, as the name signifies—sombre notwithstanding the white garment of snow in which it is enveloped. The stream flowing far beneath it is apparently one sheet of dark ice : not a familiar object is in view, and nothing is audible save the occasional snapping of a frost-bitten branch, or that strangest of all sounds, the north wind ruffling the snow-drifts on the upper hill-slopes ; not a living thing is visible, though far up, on a vast expanse of unbroken white, a tiny blue-black shadow moves like a sweeping scimitar, and I know that

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an eagle is passing from peak to lonely peak.

Away—for a brief space—from the turmoil and many conflicting interests of the great city, "mother of joys and woes," I realise the more clearly how much more beautiful and reposeful and stimulative Nature is than any imitation of her, how much greater Life than its noblest artistic manifestation. I realise, also, how true it is that the sincerest poetic function—for sonneteer as for lyricist or epicist—is not the creation of what is strange or fanciful, but the imaginative interpretation of what is familiar, so that a thing is made new to us : in the words of an eminent critic, Leslie Stephen, "the highest triumph of style is to say what everybody has been thinking in such a way as to make it new."

Here, also, in this soothing solitude, this dignified, this majestic silence, this secret and "holy lair" of her who is, the poet tells us, *Natura Benigna* or *Natura Maligna* according to the eyes that gaze and the ears that hearken, it seems as if all that is morbid and unreal and merely fanciful were indeed petty enough, and that perfect sanity of mind is as essential to the creation of any great and lasting mental product

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as perfect robustness is to the due performance of any prolonged and fatiguing physical endurance. In the words of Leslie Stephen, the highest poetry, like the noblest morality, is the product of a thoroughly healthy mind.

1886

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

THERE are two ways of approaching the study of Shakespeare's Sonnets—that of the earnest and reverent student of the man and his work, and that of the critic already biassed in some direction. It may with safety be said that no writer has suffered more at the hands of would-be interpreters. Shakespeare's simple meaning has been tortured into all manner of strange disguises: his straightforward words have been taken to signify everything from the basest immorality to the wildest of metaphysical absurdities. There is no length of mental folly that has not measured its strength with the robust and long-enduring steadfastness of our greatest poet's genius as manifested in that famous series which, as a foremost living critic has remarked, in itself constitutes a warrant of perpetual fame.

It is to be hoped that in that shadowy region where dwell the spirits of the worthy

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no earthly rumour breaks in upon the peace of one who fought triumphantly the battle of his own life, leaving, in no stinted measure, some record of the stress and strife of his mortal passions as a priceless inheritance to those that came after him. Pathetic would it be if those ears which on earth had listened to the sea-like melody of *The Tempest* and the sadder harmony of *King Lear*—the thrilling human note, the *vox-humana* of *Hamlet*—the joyous delight-in-life of *As You Like It*—the exquisite minor touches of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—pathetic would it be if those ears had to apprehend the foolish disquisitions of a Steevens on a series of poems which "had reduced their author to a level with the meanest rhymers"; or the far-fetched interpretations of a Heraud, finding in Shakespeare's mistress of a season no other than The Church, the "black but comely bride of Solomon"; the almost equally wild theories of a Gerald Massey; or the repugnant explanations of a Philarète Chasles; or, densest of all, the hopelessly muddle-headed *Eureka* of a Barnstorff, triumphantly declaring that the enigmatical "W. H." of the dedication stands for "William Himself"! and that throughout the series

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“ William ” is but apostrophising his own Interior Individuality !

If such sad circumstance do indeed afflict the serene consciousness of the great Shade in question, some mitigation of his suffering must have been afforded by the labours of those clear-sighted commentators of recent years who have been content to accept his utterances as they were meant to be understood, and, instead of vainly evolving from their inner consciousness strange and monstrous imaginings, have restricted themselves to solving, or endeavouring to solve, certain points of strictly personal or merely clerical dubiety. Pre-eminently is the gratitude of students—that is, of all lovers of Shakespeare’s poetic work—due to that accomplished writer and Shakespearean authority, Professor Dowden ; to the late J. P. Collier ; to Mr. Thomas Tyler ; to Dr. Furnivall ; to Messrs. Clarke and Wright, the Cambridge editors ; to Mr. Palgrave ; to Professor W. Minto ; to Mr. W. M. Rossetti ; to Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton ; to Mr. David Main ; to Mr. Hall Caine ; and, among foreign writers, M. Taine in France, and Mr. Grant White and Miss Hillard in America. No one of these eminent students (or of others whose names I do

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not at the moment recall) has permitted his or her mental vision to be obscured by the bewildering conjectural mists arising out of that miasma of sheer foolishness along whose illusive banks have strayed so many witless wanderers. They one and all see in the first series of sonnets (i. to xcvi.) nothing but a plain declaration of the writer's loyal, self-renouncing, nobly persistent love for a younger and perhaps not wholly worthy friend ; and with but one exception * they recognise in the remainder, the "Dark Woman" series (cxxvii. to clii.), the revelation of a great passion that for a season rendered full of bitter import the life of the greatest of our countrymen.

Among the most eminent poets of our own time, Robert Browning only has doubted Shakespeare's having shown us glimpses of his direct personal experience. We all know Wordsworth's famous words in his sonnet on *The Sonnet*: *With this same*

* Professor Minto, who regards the Woman-Series not in the light of a personal revelation, but as "exercises of skill undertaken in a spirit of wanton defiance and derision of commonplace"—a view first enunciated by Mr. Henry Brown, who particularised Michael Drayton and John Davies as the writers who were specially though indirectly thus satirised.

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key Shakespeare unlocked his heart, to which Browning takes objection, adding: "Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!"—a metrical criticism that brought forth the counter-remark of Swinburne: "No whit the less like Shakespeare, but undoubtedly the less like Browning." Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth indubitably held the personal theory, as, later, have Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Victor Hugo, and others, whose opinions, by virtue of their own poetic powers, may be considered worthy of special attention.

It may well be asked, why should there be this persistent digging for hidden significance in the work of a man whose genius was no more secretive than that of any other dramatist? We do not speculate wildly on all possible meanings that human ingenuity is capable of twisting out of the *Amoretti* of Spenser or the *Astrophel and Stella* of Sir Philip Sidney: why then should we approach Shakespeare's sonnets as if they were the profoundest enigmas?

One reason undoubtedly lies in the senseless habit of insincere laudation that prevails to such extent. Out of every twenty who speak of Shakespeare as the greatest intellect since Æschylus and Plato, are there

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ten who have ever read all his writings ? Are there five who intimately know them ? Are there even two who find endless pleasure, wonder, suggestion, comfort, inspiration, in the sonnets ? It is to be feared not. It is to be feared that there are too many whose loud appreciation of Shakespeare's greatness is based merely on an acquaintance with Irving in the characters of Hamlet and Shylock—with Ellen Terry in those of Portia and Ophelia. There is perhaps no greater test of Shakespeare's overwhelming genius than the circumstance that it successfully withstands the rank incense with which it is assailed by fools and all manner of thoughtless persons, a cloud of indiscriminate praise sufficient to obscure all but the loftiest summits in the serene region of the intellect. And it is this universal *Ave Imperator Poetarum* ! that is at least in part responsible for the innumerable vagaries of psychological commentators—this, coupled with an inherent preference on their part for darkness rather than for light. Realising that the greatest creator of multiform types of humanity is held in such universal esteem, they seem to consider it incumbent upon them to prove that he was not a man like as we are ; that in all things he was

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perfect, a flawless man, more ideal than any one of his most ideal conceptions.

What folly is this ! Granting for a moment that Shakespeare could have been the divine being some of his admirers would fain make him out, where could he have gained those experiences that render his imaginative work quick with vitality ; where could he have laid in that ballast of practical knowledge without which the ship of his genius would have sailed across no turbulent ocean of human life, traversed no perilous shoals of danger and death, but have been borne irresistibly away by any casual wind to speedy wreckage on the rocks of reality, or have foundered helplessly as soon as the transient sunshine had given place to darkness and storm ? Whatever else he was, we may rest assured that he was pre-eminently manly, and therefore that he experienced all those emotions to which men are ordinarily liable ; that he wrestled with temptations even as we ourselves do ; that not infrequently, especially in the impulsive ardours of youth, indiscretion overcame precept and prudence ; that occasionally he spoke and acted as he would fain not have done ; that once or twice, at least, in his life he had bitter cause to bewail the domination

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of the body, the surrender of the better part of him.* The magnetism of all genuine work of Shakespeare lies in its essential humanity: no one lives but could find his most salient mental and spiritual traits delineated somewhere in that marvellous gallery of portraits comprised in the Plays. Could this man, who touched to such keen music all the notes of humanity, who sounded the subtlest spiritual chords, who produced the saddest as well as the most joyous, the most majestic strains along the whole diapason of life and death, could this man have been otherwise than a veritable fellow of our own, compact of strength and weakness, will and impulse, soul and body?

And it is because this great master over the passions and follies and heroisms of man has at least once dropped the veil of impersonality that we are so fascinated by the sonnets. Here the musician who has otherwise played for all generations of humanity pipes a solitary tune of his own life, its love, its devotion, its fervour, its prophetic exaltation, its passion, its despair, its exceeding bitterness. There he speaks to the wide world, that admires while it

* *Vide*, in further confirmation, the remarkable sonnet, No. cxix.

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learns not, or but little : here, he speaks to *us*, to each one of us who have ears to hear, or have care to listen. Not only the poets—the Wordsworths, the Shelleys, the Coleridges, the Rossettis, the Victor Hugos—experience the full potency of this fascination ; the magnetism of it holds in spell all those whose view of life is, in howsoever slight degree, transformed with the glamour that is as aerial distance to the brown fallow-land of the commonplace. Veritably, we are here face to face with “ a splendour amid glooms.”

Yet another reason for the strange obtuseness of some would-be interpreters is an apparent forgetfulness of the most obvious facts of chronology. Would the man who was capable of writing such immortal works as *The Tempest*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*—so urge they, in effect—be likely to condescend to such almost unreasoning devotion to a boyish friend ? still less would he be likely to forget the unspoken commands of duty, and yield to a temptation which was doubly evil in that the sinner transgressed against both moral and civil law ? But it was not the Shakespeare of *Hamlet*, of *Lear*, of *Macbeth*, of *Othello*, who addressed the brilliant young Herbert of Pembroke in terms which now seem to us

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extravagant in their ardour ; it was not this Shakespeare who for a time forgot fealty to wife and child for an enthralling passion that disturbed his spiritual nature to its deepest depths, though it left them clearer than they had yet been, serene for evermore. But it was that younger Shakespeare, still in his years of youth, adventuresome, full of life, inspired with the fire of genius, elate with already won success, susceptible to every charm pertinent to the joyous pageant of life around him,—that Shakespeare, who, as a young man married untimely and early thrown upon the world to carve out his own destiny, so far as in him lay, loved with true affection, and with all the Euphuistic emphasis in expression characteristic of the generation, his brilliant young friend, William Herbert ; rejoiced in the company of accomplished men of divers talents ; was half surprised into and doubtless strenuously fought against a *liaison* with one whom he afterwards found to be unworthy even as a paramour. Shakespeare, like many another man, had to pass through the dark valley of humiliation and weariness and sorrow ; and they are but bat-sighted apologists who would have us believe that, instead of going through these experiences

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which taught him such infinite store of wisdom, he spent his youthful years in thinking out indifferent allegories, and in tricking them forth in still more intricate and (from this point of view) dissatisfying verbal disguise.

Nor must the fact be overlooked that at any rate one important section of these revelations—to us so deeply interesting—was never published by him either directly or indirectly, so far as has been ascertained. He was not the kind of man to invite the world in general to share in his private hopes and fears, his trials of friendship, his love agonies. The “W. H.” series, or probably but a limited number thereof, circulated among a few friends and *their* acquaintances, possibly not at Shakespeare’s instance at all (possibly, even, with only his half-willing consent), but at that of young Herbert, or even at that of some friend of the latter and generous admirer of the former. That the young poet did not look upon the authorship of the sonnets as disguisable is evident from these lines in Sonnet lxxvi. :

*Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
[i.e., in a known, a recognisable style]
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed ?*

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Also that he intended their ultimate publication in the generally accepted sense of the word may with tolerable certainty be inferred from internal evidence : *e.g.*, the last lines of Sonnet xxxviii. :

*If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.*

But it was not till many years after their composition (diverse in date as they are) that they were published in book form, and even then they had not their author's supervision, if even his direct consent to their collective issue. It is certainly unlikely that he would have published the *two series* as they appear in the Quarto of 1609, Nos. cxxvii. to clii. being beyond doubt antecedent in composition to those, or to the great majority of those, addressed to "W. H."

In the very evident deficiency in strict sequence, and in the equally manifest want of arrangement according to persons and periods, is alone almost sufficient basis for the argument that Shakespeare wrote these sonnets *not* as literary exercises, but as genuine expressions of emotion, either when first swayed by this emotion, or when stirred by vivid remembrance. One or two

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of the sonnets, peculiarly suited for adaptation, he interpolated in one of his early comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*. Otherwise, it is generally understood that the first printed sonnets of Shakespeare are those surreptitiously given by Jaggard in his quaintly styled miscellany, *The Passionate Pilgrim* (published in 1599). How Jaggard obtained these and other pieces we do not know, though it is of course possible that he applied to one who was already heralded as a coming luminary, a master of mellifluous verse,* and obtained permission to print them, the young poet all the while not suspecting that the authorship of the whole miscellany was to be attributed to him. But against this supposition there are serious objections. Firstly (but this is of minor importance), the two opening sonnets differ considerably in details from their counterparts (Nos. cxxxvii. and cxliv.) in Thomas Thorpe's edition of the Complete Sonnets, published ten years later. This might either point to the fact that Shake-

* Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury* (published in 1598), speaks of the "sweete wittie soule of Ovid" living "in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare," and refers, *inter alia*, to his "sugred sonnets among his private friends."

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speare altered the misreadings, or improved the original versions, in his own ^{or} _{and} other copies of *The Passionate Pilgrim*—corrections which duly came under the notice of Thorpe ; or else it might point to Jaggard having taken them down on hearsay, or having copied them from unrevised or carelessly replicated versions. Secondly, it is not likely that Shakespeare would have given any compiler mere studies, as undoubtedly are the *Venus and Adonis* sonnets and Divisions Nos. iv., vi., ix., and xi. of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, especially in incomplete form (as in Division ix., which wants the second line) ; charming as they are, though too characteristic of an age differing essentially from our own to be suited for “ a mixed audience,” they are manifestly but studies for, or contemporary offshoots from, the composition of *Venus and Adonis*, published from five to six years before the appearance of Jaggard’s miscellany. Thirdly, still less would he be likely to contribute odd stanzas, as Divisions x. and xiii. (probably draft-portions of, or excerpts from, an unpublished elegiac poem—printed in my edition under the title *Death in Youth and Beauty*), or Divisions xiv. and xv., disconnected sets, probably part

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of a contemplated, an unfinished, or a lost love-poem, if indeed by Shakespeare at all.

It is, of course, somewhat puzzling to understand how such sonnets as the first three of *The Passionate Pilgrim* (in publication ten years anterior to that of the first collective edition) could have come within Jaggard's cognisance unless given him by their author. It is almost certain that they were portions of the series addressed to the woman who was at one time Shakespeare's mistress, and if so, is it likely, records of strong emotion and bitter experience as they are, that he would have handed them over to an adventurous publisher? It would be easy, of course, to make one surmise after another in favour of the young poet's having done so; but where there is little light to go by, we must follow what seems most like a gleam of dayshine, and not every illusive will-o'-the-wisp that flickers along the difficult way. For my part, I can only surmise that (1) Shakespeare showed these and other love-sonnets to his friend Herbert before the latter became his rival, or else subsequently to the desertion of the latter in turn (or *his* of the Dark Woman), and that Herbert (or Earl of

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Pembroke as, in the event of the latter supposition being correct, he would be) showed them to a friend or friends, through whom they reached Jaggard; *or* (2) that Shakespeare's mistress herself, in a spirit of wanton indifference, mockery, or jealousy (hoping to stir up a real dissension between the two friends who loved her), showed or gave them to Pembroke, or perhaps out of sheer vanity allowed them to be copied by more or less disinterested acquaintances; *or* (3)—and this seems to me the likeliest of all—the whole body of the sonnets was never actually sent to his mistress at all, but in the main simply constituted Shakespeare's contemporary record of the passion that so deeply affected his life at that period. This record he may at a later period have shown to Pembroke or some other friend, and so indirectly brought about their ultimate publication. Individual sonnets; as those of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *not necessarily revealing the genuine standpoint of the writer*, may have been previously permitted to circulate in manuscript. What lover would ever have written to his mistress sonnets — *i.e.*, missives intended for her receipt—containing such remarks as

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*For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night !*

(S. cxlvii.)

or

*For I have sworn thee fair ; more perjured I
To swear against the truth so foul a lie.*

(S. clii.)

Probably, out of the twenty-six, eleven (Nos. cxxviii., cxxxi. to cxxxvi. inclusive, cxxxix., cxl., cxliii., and cxlix.) were actually sent to his mistress at different periods : the remainder (even including a sonnet like No. cl., with its "thou's") I conjecture to have been—as already stated—pages of what may be called Shakespeare's private journal of his passion, and certainly not love-missives. Not improbably they form as they stand a genuine sequence, their author having either sent copies of certain of them after their entry in his MS. book, or, as is more likely, made the entries in the latter from originals duly sent. Nos. cxxix., cxliv., cxlvi., are surely not such missives as he would have sent to the woman he loved or had loved : such a procedure would be contrary both to his own chivalrous nature and the spirit of the times. No. cxli. itself affords fairly conclusive proof that at any rate *all* the sonnets were not sent ; for in addition to its being

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such a missive as no lover, in whatever mood, would send to his *inamorata*, it may be noted that the personal address characterising the opening lines is forgotten in the couplet, where "she" usurps "thou."

The chief points of difficulty, and of critical dissensions, are, broadly speaking, five in number, *viz.*: (1) The sphinx-like Dedication; (2) the identity of the friend of Sonnets i. to cxxvi.; (3) the identity of the Rival Poet referred to in this series; (4) the arrangement of the sonnets in groups; and (5) the identity of the inspirer of Sonnets cxxvii. to clii., and the connection of the latter, if any, with the preceding series.

As briefly as possible these points must now be considered. It is possible that in endeavouring to be succinct, the writer may appear not only to take too much as indisputable, but also to assert what he has to say with an air of dogmatism: if either failing be apparent, the fault should be attributed not to him who sins unintentionally, but to the mass of commentary he has waded through, in the atmosphere involving which he has for some time past been saturated. To one who looks at the moot points with unprejudiced eyes, and with some necessary knowledge of the

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social manners as well as of the literature of the period in question, so much of what has been written on the subject seems such mere superfluity of foolishness that he almost inevitably comes to regard points of manifest likelihood as points of irrefutable certainty. Again, there is not room in a short study such as this to go into ample detail in support of asseverations: students will find what they want in the writings of Professor Dowden and other accomplished Shakespearean scholars, while ordinary readers must be content to accept in faith what is undoubtedly representative of the most recent Shakespearean criticism. For this I am indebted to Professor Dowden, Mr. Thomas Tyler, Professor Minto, and others who directly or indirectly have afforded me valuable data to work upon. Especially in connection with Part II. of my edition of the sonnets have I to acknowledge my indebtedness to the careful research and critical acumen displayed in Mr. Tyler's introduction to the photo-lithographic facsimile of the sonnets as they appear in the first Quarto (1609).

(1) *The Dedication*. The opening words have themselves been productive of some misunderstanding. *The onlie begetter*: not

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unnaturally the word "only" has been taken by many, unacquainted with the change in significance which so many of our words have undergone, to mean *sole*. Its real meaning in the phrase quoted may possibly, however, be "matchless" or "incomparable" or "super-excellent," or some other such superlative. When in Sonnet i. Shakespeare speaks of "*the only herald of the gaudy Spring*" he does not mean "sole herald," but "most welcome" or "incomparable," or perhaps "chief." *Begetter*: still more is misunderstanding liable to be caused by this word. It has been taken to signify the person who procured the sonnets for the publisher Thorpe, "the only procurer, collector, begetter" (here "only" signifying "sole"). As Professor Tyler has pointed out, there is just a possibility that Thorpe meant to convey to their problematical "procurer" the assurance that the poet's promise of "eternitie" would be literally fulfilled unto him for the great service he had rendered to literature in obtaining these sonnets for publication. But neither Mr. Tyler nor any of the most eminent recent ~~commentators~~ entertain these suppositions. The word *begetter* is now understood to have signified *originator, source of, cause*

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of. When in Sonnet xxxviii. Shakespeare addresses his friend, "*Be thou the tenth Muse . . . and he that calls on thee, let him bring forth Eternal numbers to outlive long date,*" the reference is undoubtedly the same as that underlying "begetter." "The onlie begetter" therefore may either be "the sole bringer forth, the sole cause of," or else "the incomparable inspirer" of "these insuing sonnets."

(2) *The Identity of "Mr. W. H."* Even a superficial reader would—notwithstanding a few puzzling expressions—speedily gather that Sonnets i. to cxxvi. were addressed to a dearly loved male friend of the writer: probably, also, that they constituted a more or less discernible sequence. Of long continuance, and characterised by a great amount of argumentative energy, has been the debate concerning the identity of this friend, obscurely shrouded under those puzzling initials which Mr. Thomas Thorpe so little thought were doomed to be the cause of such an amount of perplexed discussion.

The researches of critical students ultimately made it plain that the Dedicatee must have been one of two men—Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and

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William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. It might seem easy to at once fix upon the latter as the "W. H." of Mr. Thorpe, but the fact of these initials corresponding with those of Pembroke is by no means sufficient for identification. I shall not attempt in the limited space at my command to repeat all the *pros* and *cons* on either side, but may at once state that though many influential commentators have considered Southampton to be the individual referred to, it is now known, almost certainly beyond disproof, that Shakespeare's friend was William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. For the claims of Lord Southampton it may briefly be said that it was to this nobleman (who was not more than nine years the junior of the poet) that Shakespeare in 1593 dedicated his *Venus and Adonis*, and in the following year his *Rape of Lucrece*, on this second occasion using dedicatory words of such warmth of expression as nearly to coincide with the ardent language of some of the most directly personal of the sonnets. Especially is Sonnet xxvi. considered more like the method of address which Shakespeare would have pursued in the case of Lord Southampton, than of the much younger and distinctly less staid Earl of Pembroke.

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Again, Shakespeare in this preface says plainly to his older friend, "What I have done is yours ; what I have to do is yours." As for the fact that the initials in Thorpe's dedication are "W. H." and not "H. W.," it has been contended that the transposition was intentional and was meant as a blind—a rather far-fetched conclusion certainly, considering all the circumstances. As for the "Mr.," no blind, in all probability, was thereby meant. The prefix at that period had a much more elastic use than now ; examples of its similar employment could easily be adduced—*e.g.*, in *England's Parnassus* Lord Buckhurst appears as *Mr. Sackville*.

But an overwhelming amount of evidence—facts of minor weight mostly, but all tending in the same direction—renders it as nearly indisputable as any question can be without *absolutely* conclusive evidence, that the "W. H." of the sonnets was the Earl of Pembroke. Any remaining doubts in the minds of those who have perused the lucid arguments of Professor Minto in *Characteristics of English Poets* (section on "The Elizabethan Sonneteers"), of Professor Dowden, and others, must be removed after acquaintance with the latest

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researches as set forth by Mr. Thomas Tyler in his introduction to Mr. Praetorius' Quarto-Facsimile. Here we clearly learn all that is necessary concerning Pembroke's life,—his friendship with Shakespeare, his *liaison* with the same woman who at one time was the latter's mistress (certainly in the poetic, and only less certainly in the more commonly accepted meaning of the term)—that mysterious "Dark Woman," now for the first time, in all probability, identified—his Court troubles, his public career. Sixteen years younger than the great dramatist, brilliant in varied accomplishments and in manners, beautiful and well worthy of the famous race with whom he was so closely connected, it was this William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to whom as "the real source of the insuing sonnets" Thomas Thorpe, with or without the knowledge or consent of the popular nobleman ^{and} _{or} his already famous friend, inscribed his celebrated dedication. The dedication, therefore, may be taken to read thus : *To the Sole Cause (or Incomparable Inspirer) of these insuing sonnets—Mr. W[illiam] H[erbert] (Earl of Pembroke)—all Happiness, and that Eternity promised by our immortal poet, their author, wisheth the well-wishing*

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"adventurer" in issuing them in printed form, T[homas] T[horpe].

(3) To Professor Minto is due the discovery of the Rival Poet specially referred to by Shakespeare in one of the nine sonnets (lxxviii.-lxxxvi.) dealing with the pretensions of other bardic aspirants for the favour of his patron-friend. Almost every likely writer had been cited as the "better spirit" of Sonnet lxxx., the "proud full sail of whose great verse" threatened to altogether obliterate from notice his own "saucy bark." Marlowe, notwithstanding certain indubitable drawbacks to the likelihood of the supposition, and Ben Jonson, were the two generally considered as having claims to be nominated this rival poet. "I hope," says Professor Minto, "I shall not be held guilty of hunting after paradox if I say that every possible poet has been named but the right one, nor of presumption if I say that he is so obvious that his escape from notice is something little short of miraculous." With conclusive argument Mr. Minto then proceeds to prove that Chapman was this poet, a conclusion now accepted by all students as definite.

(4) *The arrangement of the Sonnets in*

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groups. It may be broadly taken for granted that any transposition of certain groups of the sonnets should not be attempted. They may, as they stand, be productive of no inconsiderable perplexity, but if every commentator had his way the confusion would in a very short time become hopeless. The example of Gerald Massey may be held forth as a solemn warning; to the meditative student none could be more salutary.

The only certain division is that of Sonnets cxxvii. to clii. from the 126 preceding: as yet, perhaps, the only defensible transposition would be the placement of cxxvii.-clii. before and not after the longer series, belonging as they do to an earlier period, not only in application, but as regards composition; moreover, this transposition would render certain portions in the subsequent series less obscure, and would indeed throw a flood of light thereupon which every one who read the sonnets for the first time would find sufficiently illuminative. Merely as a matter of personal opinion the present writer would like to see the "Dark Woman" series placed—as an interlude—between Sonnets xxxix. and xl. Here the series would fit in with peculiar

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applicability. In one or two of the immediately preceding sonnets (especially No. xxxv.) there are foreshadowings of what is taking, or has taken, place; then would come the long passion poem, revealing everything to the sympathetic reader: and, thereafter, the reproachful, forgiving, warning, consoling, beseeching series from xl. to xciv., concluding with the sonnets of Reconciliation, Nos. c. to cxxvi. Certainly, if I had ventured to interfere with the universally accepted numerical sequence, this is the order which I should have adopted.

The following divisional arrangement of the series addressed to "W. H." is to some extent based on that of Mr. Armitage Brown, on that of Dr. Furnivall in the *Leopold Shakespeare*, and on that of Mr. Tyler in his Introduction; as for the headings of the groups, these may be altered by any reader where found unsatisfactory.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| i.-xvii. | Of Persuasion (to his friend "W. H." to marry and per- petuate his beauty and race). |
| xviii.-xxxiii. | Of Shakespeare's ardent friendship for "W. H." |
| xxxiv.-xxxix. | Of Renunciation. |
| xl.-lviii. | Of Excuse, Love in Absence, Promised Immortality of Fame, and Remonstrance. |

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| | |
|---------------|---|
| ix-x | Of <u>Imitation</u> . |
| ix-xiv | Of <u>Suffering through Love</u> , and of <u>Apprehension</u> . |
| xv. | Of <u>Deep Wounds</u> . |
| xvi-xvii. | Of <u>Contemplative Regret</u> . |
| xix-xx | Of <u>Evil Rumours</u> concerning "W. H." |
| xx-xxiv | Of <u>Inevitable Death</u> and <u>Enduring Love</u> . |
| xxv-xxvi. | Of the <u>Minuteness</u> of Love's Language and of advice to "W. H." as how best to fill up an accompanying present of a book of blank leaves. |
| xxvii-xxviii. | Concerning certain rival poetic assonance in the supreme sonnet of "W. H." |
| xxviii-xxx | Of <u>Estoppelment</u> ; of <u>Rebuke</u> concerning <u>Libertinism</u> ; and of <u>Remonstrant Pleading</u> . |
| x-xxv. | Of <u>Reconciliation</u> after <u>Separation</u> ; of <u>Assurance of Fame</u> ; of <u>Marriage</u> (xxvi); of <u>Confession</u> , and of <u>Rumours</u> (xxix-xxx); <u>Ervey</u> . |

(5) *The Identity of the Inspirer of* cxvii-cxli. The identity of the woman who for a season exercised so potent a spell on Shakespeare has for long remained a complete mystery; while conjecture was possible, discovery seemed as hopeless as ascertainment of "what song the syrens sang." Even so recent and so accomplished

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an authority as Professor Dowden has written: "We shall never discover the name of the woman who for a season could sound, as no one else, the instrument of Shakespeare's heart from the lowest note to the top of the compass. To the eyes of no diver among the wrecks of time will that curious talisman gleam." But that curious talisman has been revealed to the vision of Mr. Tyler; he, and the Rev. W. A. Harrison, and, indirectly, the late Rev. F. C. Fitton, have solved an apparently inscrutable enigma. I cannot here repeat or even give a digest of all they have to say on this interesting subject, and it must suffice to affirm that it is now established, probably beyond disproof, that the woman who was the mistress first of Shakespeare and then of the Earl of Pembroke was known as Mrs. Mary Fitton. Mary Fitton, or Ffitton, of good parentage, was born in 1578, so that she would be about seventeen when Shakespeare first saw her, or between eighteen and nineteen when the *liaison* may have occurred (possibly it was considerably later), a conjecture founded on the fact that *Love's Labour's Lost* (containing allusive sonnets) was played at the Christmas of 1597. Whether she favoured Shakespeare

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wife of the Duke of Devonshire. The
 story is admitted, and that it was while she
 was under her father's roof. The interesting
 episode was one of those domestic and family
 incidents. For the husband was a Captain
 Lougher, about whom was passing before the
 time an extraordinary tale, but in being
 driven well on by the young Earl of
 Pembroke, who, while discussing the fact,
 utterly forgot all marriage. Mr. Tyler
 suggests the possibility that she had been
 married in her own youth, and marriage is
 annulled. It seems, if the existence
 of which is almost strong evidence. If
 so, she must have received a divorce on the
 legal point raised by Mr. Tyler, otherwise
 Pembroke would have had no need to
 reject his proposition not to marry Mary
 Fitz. The fact of this scandal was
 first a circumstance which tends to prove
 that the woman-schemers were written at
 varying periods, and that Pembroke found
 passion a stronger force than the loyalty
 of friendship. The case would seem to be
 that Sir Edward Fitton, while in Ireland
 on political duty, arranged for his young
 daughter's marriage with a Captain Lougher;
 that this marriage was solemnised, but after-
 wards annulled on account of some irregu-

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larity in money matters; that while in London, after her father's return, Mary Fitton (having renounced the name of Lougher) saw Shakespeare acting, or otherwise made his acquaintance; entertained a fancy and possibly a passion for him; later on allowed Pembroke to take Shakespeare's place, and became mother of a child by the former; got into disgrace with the Queen; transferred her favours to Sir Richard Leveson, knight, by whom she had two illegitimate children; and finally married her second husband, a Captain (or Mr.) Polwhele.

These circumstances are in themselves sufficient to prove that Mary Fitton was if not a woman of rare beauty at any rate one of extraordinary fascination. We know (cxxxviii.) that she was a skilled musician on the virginal, surely a certain way to touch the heart of Shakespeare, the poet who of all others has written with most emphasis and unmistakable sincerity of music; that she had lovely eyes, dark and with that pathos generally accompanying depth—

*And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy
face—*

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and that her mouth was formed for sweet speech and lover's kisses :

Those lips that Love's own hand did make.

The bitter emphasis of lines 13, 14 in cxlvi. and lines 13, 14 in clii. do not of necessity point to anything repellent in her features or expression. The word "fair" in both instances probably refers more to her real, her inner nature than to her external appearance ; but, even if taken literally, Shakespeare's words would simply mean that having addressed her on occasions in the stereotyped complimentary phraseology of the time, calling her fair when she was really dark-haired, dark-eyed, and olive-complexioned, he privately denounces his own forswearing, once that the glamour of passion has been wholly or almost wholly dissipated. Professor Minto argues well for his theory that the " Dark Woman " series was the outcome of a spirit of mockery or defiance of conventional mistress-sonneteering, intensified here and there into seeming vivid reality of emotion through the writer's essentially dramatic genius ; but it is hardly likely that he will gain wide support in this view, quite possible as it certainly is. With Professor Dowden we may conjecture whether we

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do not in some measure owe Cleopatra to this strange passion of Shakespeare : surely, the woman he so loved, the woman of whom he sometimes wrote so bitterly (*see* especially the lines entitled "A Woman" among his Poems), must have coloured many of his conceptions of women and women's ways? It seems to me a great mistake to consider the heroine of the sonnets as a woman destitute of beauty—Mr. Tyler would even have it, without the charm of a soft or pleasing voice—simply because of Shakespeare's allusion to her blackness or darkness of complexion; a black beauty, as has been pointed out by A. Hillard, was a phrase universally used to express a brunette as late even as the age of Queen Anne. A beautiful, certainly a fascinating "brunette" she must have been. The debatable Sonnet cxxx. must not be taken as expressive of deficiencies in beauty and manners on the part of Shakespeare's mistress : there, in a spirit of irony as much as of earnestness, he wrote literal truth, yet with a saving clause that transformed all he had said—negatived his negatives, so to speak.

On the sonnets themselves I need not now expatiate, great though the temptation

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may be. Briefly it may be noted, as regards their metrical structure, that much has been inconsiderately written concerning the inefficiency of the Shakespearean as compared with other sonnet-forms. The greatest of sonneteers since Shakespeare—one, moreover, who himself seldom adopted the model of the master-poet he so intensely admired—declared that “conception—FUNDAMENTAL BRAIN-WORK—is what makes the difference in all art. . . . A Shakespearean sonnet is better than the most perfect in form, because Shakespeare wrote it.” In confirmation of this dictum of Rossetti, I quote the words of the chief living authority on the “sonnet,” Theodore Watts-Dunton, who, after objecting to Mark Pattison’s strange assertion that Shakespeare’s selection of the sonnet-form was an unfortunate choice of vehicle, and after justly referring to Sonnet cxxix. (*The expense of spirit in a waste of shame*) as the greatest in the world, proceeds: “The quest of the Shakespearean sonnet is not, like that of the form adopted by Milton, sonority, and, so to speak, metrical counterpoint, but sweetness; and the sweetest of all possible arrangements in English versification is a succession of decasyllabic quatrains in alternate rhymes knit

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together, and clinched by a couplet—a couplet coming not too far from the initial verse to lose its binding power, and yet not too near the initial verse for the ring of epigram to disturb the 'linked sweetness long drawn out' of this movement, but sufficiently near to shed its influence over the poem back to the initial verse."

Veritably, to use Shakespeare's own phrase, these "deep-brained sonnets" are a legacy of inestimable value.

*Subtle as Sphinx ; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair ;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.*

Their sonority, their grandeur, their beauty, their deep-reaching music and subtle human "reverberations," are ours whensoever we will ; but still more may we find strength and refreshment in the great nature they reveal—self-abnegating, loyal, reaching down from the heights of supremity with a humility that has in it something of pathos as well as of spiritual nobility.

GREAT ODES

THE ode is the most unpopular of all poetic forms : exceptions such as Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*, for example, and the odes of Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth are loved by virtue of their own beauty, and not for their more or less close resemblance to certain irregular stanzaic poems which have come to be regarded as typical odes. The very word, to the ear of the general reader, seems to carry with it some suggestion either of affected sentiment, inflated diction, or both in unhappy union. But, besides this common and by no means unjustifiable prejudice, there is much uncertainty as to what an ode is. If Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* be one, how can we fitly class with it, for example, Coleridge's *Ode to France* or Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*? Poets themselves are generally as much at sea in their definitions as is the ordinary reader, and will freely accept as an ode anything

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between the irregular stanzaic outpourings of Cowley, or Pope's merely rhetorical *St. Cecilia's Day*, and Shelley's impassioned, outwelling lyric *To a Skylark*. ✓

With the Pindaric ode it is needless to concern ourselves. Completely misapprehended at first, and, later, arbitrarily and mistakenly raised as a fixed model, its influence, such as it is, has been almost entirely harmful. The true Pindaric ode has all the regularity of tidal music in its swelling strains; the conventional Anglo-Pindaric ode is merely a series of irregular metres, arbitrarily separated into strophe, antistrophe, and epode, or, equally arbitrarily, into irregular stanzas. Each ode of Pindar has its own music, as each conch stranded by the waves has its own forlorn vibration of the sea's rhythm; whereas the so-called Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators have no more individuality of music than have the exercises of instrumentalists in contradistinction to the compositions of musicians. It would seem as though the ode, whenever modelled more or less closely upon the conventional type, loses all spontaneity, all freedom of movement: it is as though we were conscious of the poet singing. The supreme quality of

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lyrical music is its inevitableness. Wordsworth's great irregular *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* fails in rhythmic effect just where he adopts an arbitrary metrical system—where there is no seduction of the ear, because not a line is inevitable :

*A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral ;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song :
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love or strife ;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part ;
Filling from time to time his " humorous stage " "
With all the persons, down to palsied age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.*

Here Wordsworth, conscious that he was writing an ode, evidently believed that if he did not frequently interpolate such short accidental measures as those quoted, he would produce a poem, but not distinctively an ode. It is the freedom from any unfortunate convention that makes his *Ode to Duty* so supremely fine—an ode in which there is not a stanza, not a line even, which would have satisfied the eighteenth-century

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poets and critics. Yet what lofty beauty in this ode of seven eight-line stanzas :

*Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face ;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds ;
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee,
are fresh and strong.*

After this dignified reticence, what a babbling there seems in :

*As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.*

It is here, at once, that we reach the primary rule which should guide the poet. Let him give himself up to his poetic instinct, which is the same thing as saying that he should let his rhythmic emotion dominate his critical heed of metrical propriety. We may be sure that, in the fulfilment of this rule, there will be no more Anglo-Pindaric odes.

It would be difficult to imagine a drearier volume of verse than one composed of odes of the conventional type. Fine, even, as is Dryden's *St. Cecilia's Day*, how false its

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metallic music seems compared with that which is produced under no superficial law of conventional propriety, but under the deeper law of shaping emotion! Still, if the term could be applied only to poems of this class, they would have to be accepted on their own merits. But the word is no more thrall to one species of verse than to another, and a volume of fine odes might be compiled which would not include a single example of the Pindaric or pseudo-Pindaric type. An ode was originally a lyrical composition, a song. When, with the cessation of the choric chant, the strophe, antistrophe, and epode lost their musical value, the divisions became arbitrary. The ancient choral lyric, which had been accompanied by music, was no longer the same thing when it came to be privily read instead of publicly chanted. Thenceforth lyrical poetry was not verse indissociable from the sympathetic strains of the lyre or other instrument, or the human voice, but gradually attained a music of its own: a music in a sense allied to, but practically distinct from, vocal or instrumental melody. So, now, a "lyric" does not mean a poem for singing: most of our finest lyrics, indeed, are beyond the compass of the singer.

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Poems so unlike each other in rapidity and buoyancy of movement as Shelley's *Cloud* and Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* are, the one as much as the other, entitled to be called lyrics, though they could not be sung. On the other hand, many of the truest lyrics by Heine, Béranger, and Burns are also true songs. But, by common consent, the term "ode" is never now applied to a lyrical composition intended to be set to music. That the word cannot be restricted to a solemn or grandiose theme, treated with sedate harmony, would seem demonstrable ; otherwise, for example, that swift and impassioned lyric, the *Ode to the West Wind*, could not be classed with, say, the *Ode to Duty*.

What then is, or should be, an ode : an English ode, for English poets ? Surely it must be commonly agreed that, as we have no classic model, or none suitable, we cannot determine any metrical form as one pre-eminently worthy to be distinguished as The Ode. As an ode is no longer a poem to be chanted, and is not a lyric to be sung, shall it be called simply a lyric ? This, of course, would be inadequate : for many poems, of an absolutely distinct nature (though with a common fundamental principle),

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are comprised under the generic name of lyric.

Each of us expects in an ode, whether it consist of a set of irregular stanzaic divisions or of a regular series of regular stanzas (the only primary distinctions now recognised), a dignity and even solemnity of beauty in expression, in harmony with a theme lofty in itself, or of worthy purport. It does not follow, however, that every loftily-fine lyrical poem with a nobly compulsive theme is an ode; otherwise Emily Brontë's *Last Lines* would have as much claim to be so classed as Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*. Here, at once, we have a clue. *The Nativity* is a lyrical poem to be distinguished as an ode because it is not a lyric in the sense of being an impulsive, irrepressible, individual outcry, a purely personal utterance; whereas the *Last Lines*, or Shelley's *Stanzas written in Dejection*, Heine's *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'*, or Burns' *Ae fond kiss*, Wordsworth's *I wandered lonely as a cloud*, or Tennyson's *Tears, idle tears*, are not odes, though an ode is a lyric, by virtue of their acutely personal note. But, again, mere impersonality is not the sole distinguishing factor, otherwise scores of familiar lyrics would be odes.

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I remember hearing an eminent critic define the modern ode as "a slow lyric." But this, as we have seen, is not enough. It must be, first of all, not only a "slow" but a majestic lyric: its measures must move with dignity and grandeur, or at least with a stately beauty that is serene rather than impassioned. Then it must be impersonal, in the sense that it must not be a direct personal outcry, though, in common with all true poetry, it must be absolutely individualistic in utterance. Just as there are motives which can be best expressed in the blank-verse epic, in the heroic-couplet narrative, in the ballad, the sonnet, or the quatrain, so there are motives which can best be expressed in the ode, or in what may be called odic measures. But that high sentiment cannot alone justify the claim to be an ode may be shown by example. Among all our Victorian poets none is or was so fitted for the writing of odic poems as Matthew Arnold. Many of his compositions are, in the truest sense, odes. He loved a slow, stately sweep of verse, or a not less dignified brevity of metre, and his poetic emotion had keenest insight when, like the condor, it moved in calm and serene flight far above the highest summits

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of the moods and passions of the moment. There is a very noble poem of his which, though in a sense personal, is only relatively so: it is lofty in sentiment and lofty in expression. It is the poem *Morality*, fit comrade for Wordsworth's *Duty*.

*We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the hearth resides,
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides ;
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.*

Thus it begins, and mounts to a higher music when Nature delivers her message, closing with the rapt lines :

*I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space ;
I felt it in some other clime !
I saw it in some other place !
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God.*

A few pages before *Morality* in Matthew Arnold's poetical works occurs a poem which is truly an ode, *In Utrumque Paratus* :

*If in the silent mind of One all-pure
At first imagined lay
The sacred world, and by procession sure*

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*From those still deeps, in form and colour drest,
Seasons alternating, and night and day,
The long mused thought to north, south, east, and
west,
Took them its all-seen way ;*

*O waking on a world which thus-wise springs !
Whether it needs thee count
Betwixt thy waking and the birth of things
Ages or hours—O waking on life's stream !
By lonely pureness to the all-pure fount
(Only by this thou canst) the colour'd dream
Of life remount !*

*Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,
And faint the city gleams,
Rare the lone pastoral huts ; marvel not thou !
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams ;
Alone the sun arises, and alone
Spring the great streams.*

* * * *

*O man, whom Earth, thy long-vest mother, bare
Not without joy, so radiant, so endow'd
(Such happy issue crown'd her painful care) !
Be not too proud !*

*Thy native world stirs at thy feet unknown,
Yet there thy secret lies !
Out of this stuff, these forces, thou art grown,
And proud self-severance from them were
Disease.*

*O scan thy native world with pious eyes !
High as thy life be risen, 'tis from these ;
And these, too, rise.*

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Why may this fine poem be called an ode, this and the short measured *Bacchanalia* and several other familiar poems by Matthew Arnold, and the term be denied to *Morality*? Both deal with a lofty subject, and each has a gracious serenity of utterance. Does a too great simplicity of rhyme-scheme modify the grandiose impression which an ode should afford? If so, Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* would surely come under the ban. Is it not, really, that the utterance is more of individual than general import? "An ode is a poem in irregular rhymed stanzas with abruptly varying metres, or series of regular-rhymed decasyllabic stanzas," says one authority; but neither rhyme nor conformity with any stanzaic arrangement is actually necessary, still less a decasyllabic uniformity. Collins's beautiful *Ode to Evening* consists of a series not merely of quatrains, but of unrhymed quatrains. To return to Matthew Arnold: the poem entitled *The Future* is really an ode, though it depends upon assonance instead of rhyme, and is irregular in its divisions:

*Haply, the river of Time,
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights*

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*On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.
And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the grey expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast,
As the pale waste widens around him—
As the banks fade dimmer away—
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea.*

Morality, again, is not a swift lyric, but it is clear that it has not throughout that slow majestic phrasing which would seem to be the first essential of odic metres. This brings us to the point, can "swift" lyrics be aptly described as odes?

There can be little doubt that the term would be almost meaningless if it were allowed to comprise every lyrical form. If the ode be at once "a high remote chant" and an impassioned apostrophe, it must cease to be distinctive, must become as liberal a term as "lyric" itself. Are we to call the *Hymn on Christ's Nativity* and the *Ode to the West Wind*, or *To the Skylark*, by one common name? Yet each has been accepted as an ode. It may be suggested

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that any poem finely wrought and full of high thinking, which is of the nature of an apostrophe or of sustained intellectual meditation on a single theme of general purport, should be classed as an ode. This, it seems to me, may fairly be accepted if, further, the distinction between the personal and impersonal lyric be observed, and if it be understood that the form must neither be narrative nor dramatic, nor, again, be of an obtrusively choric nature.

In the only compilation of English odes which I know, that edited by Mr. Edmund Gosse, there will be found sufficient variety of type to prove the aptness of any complaint anent the uncertainty as to what is or is not an ode. Mr. Gosse can find room for Prior's indifferent and merely occasional *Ode on the Taking of Namur* :

*Some Folks are drunk, yet do not know it :
So might not Bacchus give you law ?
Was it a muse, O lofty Poet,
Or virgin of St. Cyr, you saw ?
Why all this fury ? What's the matter,
That oaks must come from Thrace to dance ?
Must stupid stocks be taught to flatter,
And is there no such wood in France ? &c.*

Nor does he hesitate, while he omits Crashaw and, among the moderns, Hood, to include

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Akenside's amiable but commonplace *On Leaving Holland*, Warton's lines on the *First of April* beginning :

*With dalliance rude young Zephyr woos
Coy May. Full oft with kind excuse
The boisterous boy the Fair denies, &c.,*

and Cowper's episodical poem in narrative-quatrains, *Boadicea*, ending :

*She with all a monarch's pride
Felt them on her bosom glow ;
Rushed to battle, fought, and died :
Dying, hurled them at the foe.*
“ *Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven award the vengeance due ;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you.*”

Of course, in no real sense are these compositions odes, either after a classical or pseudo-classical model or in the most liberal modern interpretation. Again, though poetically of better worth, three other poems which Mr. Gosse includes in his collection have no claim to be called odes : Landor's *Lines to Joseph Ablett*, Leyden's fine stanzas *To an Indian Gold Coin*, and Gray's charming poem *On the Spring*. Yet Mr. Gosse himself writes, in his introduction : “ We take as an ode any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and

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dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

Perhaps the most fatal fault the ode can have is to be narrative in form. It is this that vitiates Gray's *Bard*, which, in our modern sense of the word, is not an ode at all, but a narrative poem of a declamatory kind. If *The Bard* be an ode, then *Marmion* is simply an enlarged example of the same species. For this reason I cannot consider it to be an ode. Indeed, conclusive evidence is afforded in Mr. Gosse's book that the odes written more or less closely to the supposedly conventional type are invariably inferior to those regular stanzaic poems which follow a natural law. It is not merely the difference between the genius of Milton and that of Cowley which constitutes such a gulf between the opening lines of *Christ's Passion* and the *Nativity*. After the majestic music of the latter how artificial, as well as how commonplace, sounds :

*Enough, my Muse, of earthly things,
And inspirations but of mind,
Take up thy lute and to it bind
Loud and everlasting strings ;
And on them play, and to them sing,
The happy mournful stories,
The lamented glories
Of the great Crucified King !*

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*Mountainous heap of wonders, which dost rise
Till earth thou joinest with the skies !
Too large at bottom and at top too high
To be half seen by mortal eye ;
How shall I grasp this boundless thing ?
What shall I play ? What shall I sing ?
I'll sing the mighty riddle of mysterious love,
Which neither wretched man below, nor blessed spirits
above
With all their comments can explain
How all the whole world's Life to die did not
disdain.*

Odes, whether irregular or regular, may broadly be divided into three kinds—those which deal loftily with lofty themes of a more or less abstract, or at any rate impersonal nature ; those which are Elegiac ; and those which are Nuptial. There are several Nuptial odes which have high qualities, but there is only one that stands out supremely fine—the noble *Epithalamium* of Spenser. This is not only our first great ode, but the most splendid marriage-hymn in our language.

The Elegiac odes hold a place apart. Properly, they should be strictly elegiacal—odes of mourning. The most remarkable modern example of this species of verse is Tennyson's monody on the death of the Duke of Wellington. One of the

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earliest, and certainly not one of the least beautiful, is that of Dryden, inscribed *To the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew*. *Thyrsis*, again, is one of the finest of modern elegiac odes. This species of ode, however, is of necessity of a directly personal nature, and so is outside of the plan of this volume.

Among the first kind, the true English odes, a wide metrical licence may be allowed, so long as the poems are in truth set forth "in exalted verse, and deal progressively with one dignified theme," yet are not narrative, nor impassioned personal outcries. If on the one hand this excludes from the category of odes so famous an example as *The Bard*, so also are excluded those exquisite lyrics the odes *To the West Wind* and *To a Skylark*. Both the latter have too much of the lyric cry in them to be classed even with the same author's odes on Liberty and on Naples.

With the beautiful *Epithalamium*, or Marriage Ode, of Spenser may be classed two from Crashaw, which have not hitherto been printed as odes. To them may be added the *St. Mary Magdalene* of the same ardent and noble poet. In common with the *Ode on the Passions* of Collins, and many others down to the lengthy and in

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one sense formless odes of Emerson, Crashaw's are not divided into sections or stanzas, and have the simplest rhyme-scheme. Milton's "majestic numbers" aptly follow. Indubitably fine as is Dryden's *St. Cecilia's Day*, it will not strike the happiest note in the ode-music of which it is part; nor do even such masterpieces as Gray's *Progress of Poesy* and Collins's *On the Superstitions of the Highlands* seem really in harmony with the sweet movement of Spenser's verse, the organ-tone of Milton's, the noble dignity of Wordsworth's, the rhythmic freedom of Coleridge's, the ardour of Shelley's, or the flawless artistry of the odes of Keats. Still, as the finest examples of the conventional ode (for Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* is conventional only in a secondary degree), it is well that they should be included. Yet what lover of poetry would not barter a score of such odes as the two celebrated poems of Gray and Collins for the latter's lovely unrhymed *Ode to Evening*?

Wordsworth's lines to Duty constitute one of the finest odes of modern literature, though naturally enough the *Intimations of Immortality* is far better known. In some respects the longer is unquestionably the

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~~greater poem~~ but as Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton has pointed out in his searching and ~~wide~~ *essay* in Poetry, it suffers ever and again from lack of that inevitableness which supreme poetic forms invariably and necessarily possess. If I had to select a single poem as the model of the ideal English ode it would be Coleridge's *France*, whose superb and lordly music is inspired by a lordly and superb idea. It is as far above the *Ode of the Departing Year* or that on *Dejection* as these are above the odes of Warton and Akenside. There is little either of the classical or of the conventional type in the glowing odes of Shelley, and still less of either in the perfect stanzas of Keats, the most flawless poems of their kind in the language. The latest among the writers of the immediate past from whom I should select an ode is Thomas Hood, that rare and commonly misunderstood genius. His *Autumn* has a unique beauty; the lines beginning

*O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair*

are perfect. Unfortunately it has one vital artistic flaw, the presentment of Autumn in the first stanza as an old man, "shaking

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his languid locks all dewy bright with tangled gossamer," whereas a little later Autumn is presented to us in the guise of a beautiful woman, fair but weary. Indeed, the poet's vision was doubly veiled, for there is an obvious contradiction between the verbal picture of the opening lines, with old Autumn standing in the misty morn, "shadowless like Silence," and "listening to silence" (in itself a beautiful picture)—

*For no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn—*

and that of the gossamer "pearling his coronet of golden corn": for the time of the golden corn is not one of misty, lifeless silence. Among the Autumnal odes written by later poets I know of none to surpass that by Mr. Aubrey De Vere, which would be quoted were it not overlong.

The ode, both irregular and regular, has been a favourite means of expression with many of the foremost American poets, though Poe, by virtue of his genius being in its utterance more lyrical, literally, than sedately measured, is not to be numbered among them. Longfellow, again, has written few poems which could come under the

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present category. Even his *Palingenesis* (which is included in my Anthology) has too much of singing melody in it to admit of its being unreservedly classed as an ode. On the other hand, the "Father of American Poetry," as Bryant has been called, was by nature an ode-writer. His beautiful lines *To a Water-fowl* take the place in American poetry occupied by Collins's *To Evening* in that of England. *The Winds* and *The Hymn of the City* are also fine odes. The critic who speaks of Emerson as a poet of high order is no longer sneered at, and so I may venture to state that some of his poems are very noble odes. Bayard Taylor, notable poet as he was, had seldom the serene atmosphere and more rarely still the deep vision of his great contemporary; but some of his odes are, and deservedly, likely to be long treasured by his countrymen. On a higher level are the noble strains of James Russell Lowell, unquestionably one of the three foremost poets whom America has produced. It is the highest compliment that could be paid to them to say that his odes do not suffer by comparison with their kindred by Wordsworth and Coleridge; and among other modern American poets I would draw particular attention to Edmund

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Clarence Stedman, whose *Ode to Pastoral Romance* is perhaps his finest achievement.

Among the later Victorian poets there are many who have written odes—so called, and so in truth, though not thus entitled—and a few who have written poems of this kind which will long be read appreciatively, even if not assured of perpetuity. But Coventry Patmore is the only poet of our day who has preferred the ode to any other form for habitual expression. But over and above this he has, like an ingenious gardener who has evolved a new and graceful flower from a familiar stock, made a new kind of verse, or, rather, given a new direction to a certain kind of verse. In the recent popular edition of the most remarkable of his books, *The Unknown Eros, and other Odes*, all his poems written in catalectic verse are included. I cannot do better than quote from Coventry Patmore's prefatory note :

"Nearly all English metres owe their existence as metres to 'catalexis,' or pause, for the time of one or more feet, and, as a rule, the position and amount of catalexis are fixed. But the verse in which this volume is written is catalectic *par excellence*, employing the pause (as it does the rhyme)

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with freedom only limited by the exigencies of poetic passion. From the time of Drummond of Hawthornden to our own, some of the noblest flights of English poetry have been taken on the wings of this verse ; but with ordinary readers it has been more or less discredited by the far greater number of abortive efforts, on the part sometimes of considerable poets, to adapt it to purposes with which it has no expressional correspondence ; or to vary it by rhythmical movements which are destructive of its character. Some persons, unlearned in the subject of metre, have objected to this kind of verse that it is ' lawless.' But it has its laws as truly as any other. In its highest order, the lyric or ' ode,' it is a tetrameter, the line having the time of eight iambics. When it descends to narrative, or the expression of a less-exalted strain of thought, it becomes a trimeter, having the time of six iambics, or even a dimeter, with the time of four ; and it is allowable to vary the tetrameter ' ode ' by occasional introduction of passages in either or both of these inferior measures, but not, I think, by the use of any other. The licence to rhyme at indefinite intervals is counterbalanced in the writing of all poets who have employed

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this metre successfully, by unusual frequency in the recurrence of the same rhyme. For information on the generally overlooked but primarily important function of catalexis in English verse, I refer such readers as may be curious about the subject to the essay printed as an appendix to the later editions of my collected poems. I do not pretend to have done more than very moderate justice to the exceeding grace and dignity and the inexhaustible expressiveness of which this kind of metre is capable ; but I can say that I have never attempted to write in it in the absence of that one justification of and prime qualification for its use, namely, the impulse of some thought that 'voluntary moved harmonious numbers.' "

Of Patmore's poems, *The Unknown Eros* and *The Day after To-morrow* are examples of the longer, and *Wind and Wave* and *The Body* of the shorter, ode ; while *The Contract* is an instance of an ode wherein poetic dialogue takes the place of the ancient choric strophe and antistrophe. Two other remarkable odes are *Deliciæ Sapientiæ de Amore* and *Legem tuam Dilexi*. There is a new music, a new voice. and, to our ears, one strange almost as that of

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Crashaw himself, in these poems. I can find space for a few lines only from the second.

*For, ah, who can express
How full of bonds and simpleness
Is God,
How narrow is He,
And how the wide, waste field of possibility
Is only trod
Straight to His homestead in the human heart,
And all His art
Is as the babe's that wins his Mother to repeat
Her little song so sweet !
What is the chief news of the Night ?
Lo, iron and salt, heat, weight and light
In every star that drifts on the great breeze !
And these
Mean Man,
Darling of God, whose thoughts but live and move
Round him ; Who woos his will
To wedlock with His own, and does distil
To that drop's span
The attar of all rose-fields of all love.*

Although it cannot properly be classed as an ode, there is a little poem by Patmore, entitled *The Toys*, which, though based on a familiar episode and weighted throughout with acute personal emotion, reaches so lofty a height by its very simplicity that it has much more claim to be termed an ode than many better-known poems so called. For the benefit of those

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readers who do not know Coventry
Patmore's writings, I add it here :

*My little son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up
wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my
own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there
with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,*

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*Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
" I will be sorry for their childishness."*

Lord Tennyson, notwithstanding his unsurpassed mastery of his poetic material, did not succeed in writing any memorable ode. His best, that *On the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, is grandiose rather than grand, and though it was greatly admired at the time of its publication, and for many years afterwards, it now seems somewhat lifeless, forced—in a word, a *pièce d'occasion*. In scarce any of Tennyson's poems is there so marked a lack of rhythmic energy, although in parts the music moves in lordly fashion. But how unspontaneous it is may best be gauged by examination of those lines and passages every here and there which in nowise seem the natural expression of Tennyson's genius ; as, for example, the half-felt, assertively patriotic close of the eighth section :

*And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumin'd cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.*

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Some of the finest Victorian odes, whether or not so called, are by Matthew Arnold, and one of the most remarkable is the death-hymn of Empedocles in *Empedocles on Etna*. This is a noble ode, with a serene if austere music.

*Like us, the lightning-fires
Love to have scope and play ;
The stream, like us, desires
An unimpeded way ;
Like us, the Libyan wind delights to roam at large.*

*Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To give his virtues room ;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's
barge.*

*Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play ;
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away !
Allows the proudly-riding and the foundered bark.*

It is as though the souls of Marcus Aurelius and Seneca and Epictetus had found utterance in :

*Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in the Spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done ;
To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling
foes ;*

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*That we must feign a bliss
Of doubtful future date,
And, while we dream on This,
Lose all our present state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose ?*

* * * *

*But thou, because thou hear'st
Men scoff at Heaven and Fate,
Because the Gods thou fear'st
Fail to make blest thy state,
Tremblest, and wilt not dare to trust the joys there
are !*

*I say : Fear not ! Life still
Leaves human effort scope.
But, since life teems with ill,
Nurse no extravagant hope ;
Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then
despair !*

Foremost, however, among all contemporary writers of odes is Swinburne. He delights to expend his liberal rhetoric in sounding measures ; and though often his odes, beautiful as they are, are more declamatory than thought-weighted, there are at least two or three which will surely always hold their supreme place in Victorian poetry. In magnificence of music and splendour of imagery the *Ode on the Eve of Revolution* stands foremost. Swinburne also has written the finest elegiac ode of our time, the superb and solemn *Ave atque Vale*, written in

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memory of Baudelaire. There is unsurpassable music in these stanzas, slow-sweeping like long sea-billows :

I

*Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?
Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet ?*

* * * *

VI

*Now all strange hours and all strange loves are
over,
Dreams and desires and sombre things and
sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees and
feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still keep
The savour and shade of old-world pine-forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep ?*

* * * *

Great Odes

XVIII

*For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,
And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobeian womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done ;
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.*

Finally, I may allude to the two or three fine odes which George Meredith has written. Chief among them is the noble *Ode to France : December, 1870*. One, more brief, from his volume, *A Reading of Earth*, I may quote :

MEDITATION UNDER STARS

*What links are ours with orbs that are
So resolutely far :
The solitary asks, and they
Give radiance as from a shield :
Still at the death of day,
The seen, the unrevealed.
Implacable they shine
To us who would of Life obtain
An answer for the life we strain,
To nourish with one sign.
Nor can imagination throw
The penetrative shaft : we pass*

Great Odes

*The breath of thought, who would divine
If haply they may grow
As Earth ; have our desire to know ;
If life comes there to grain from grass,
And flowers like ours of toil and pain ;
Has passion to beat bar,
Win space from cleaving brain ;
The mystic link attain,
Whereby star holds on star.*

*Those visible immortals beam
Allurement to the dream :
Ireful at human hungers brook
No question in the look.
For ever virgin to our sense,
Remote they wane to gaze intense :
Prolong it, and in ruthlessness they smite
The beating heart behind the ball of sight :
Till we conceive their heavens hoar,
Those lights they raise but sparkles frore,
And Earth, our blood-warm Earth, a shuddering
prey
To that frigidity of brainless ray.*

*Yet space is given for breath of thought
Beyond our bounds when musing : more
When to that musing love is brought,
And love is asked of love's wherefore.
'Tis Earth's, her gift ; else have we nought :
Her gift, her secret, here our tie.
And not with yet and yonder sky ?
Bethink you : were it Earth alone
Breeds love, would not her region be
The sole delight and throne
Of generous Deity ?*

Great Odes

*To deeper than this ball of sight
Appeal the lustrous people of the night.
Fronting yon shoreless, sown with fiery sails,
It is our ravenous that quails,
Flesh by its craven thirsts and fears distraught.
The spirit leaps alight,
Doubts not in them is he,
The binder of his sheaves, the sane, the right :
Of magnitude to magnitude is wrought,
To feel it large of the great life they hold
In them to come, or vaster interwolved,*

*The issues known in us, our unsolved solved :
That there with toil Life climbs the self-same
Tree,
Whose roots enrichment have from ripeness
dropped.
So may we read and little find them cold :
Let it but be the lord of Mind to guide
Our eyes ; no branch of Reason's growing lopped ;
Nor dreaming on a dream ; but fortified
By day to penetrate black midnight ; see,
Hear, feel, outside the senses ; even that we,
The specks of dust upon a mound of mould,
We who reflect those rays, though low our place,
To them are lastingly allied.*

*So may we read, and little find them cold :
Nor frosty lamps illuminating dead space,
Not distant aliens, not senseless Powers.
The fire is in them whereof we are born ;
The music of their motion may be ours.
Spirit shall deem them beckoning Earth and
voiced
Sisterly to her, in her beams rejoiced.*

Great Odes

*Of love the grand impulsion, we behold
The love that lends her grace
Among the starry fold.
Then at new flood of customary morn,
Look at her through her showers,
Her mists, her streaming gold,
A wonder edges the familiar face :
She wears no more that robe of printed hours ;
Half strange seems Earth, and sweeter than her
flowers.*

It is in poems such as this, governed, as to their metrical music, by a natural and not by an arbitrary law, that we find the true English ode, "the slow, majestic lyric."

1890

“ LA JEUNE BELGIQUE ”

(1893)

FOR more than a decade an interesting and highly significant literary movement has evolved in Belgium. This renaissance, for such it is, is quite distinct from the slowly waning Flemish literary revival which took on a new vitality about the time of the Franco-German conflict ; and, on the other hand, from the somewhat insipid “ French tradition,” which has the actual or partly imaginary status of official and conservative recognition.

This movement, be it noted, arose under conditions and in circumstances practically similar to those which determined in France the foundation of the famous Parnasse of 1866. The aim of the Belgic, as of the French Parnassiens was, in the words of one of the most noteworthy, not to create a particular poetic school, but to bring about a reaction against literary ignorance, disorder, and general backbonelessness

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(*amorphisme ambiant*) ; not to open a little private chapel, but to clear and garnish afresh “la grande église où régnent la religion désintéressée de l’art et le respect de la forme.” This brotherhood of a Parnasse Belgique has naturally had its schisms and defections. Its latest apologist, M. Gilkin, admits this ; but he adds that since 1887 (when *La Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique* was published) the group of new men has remained almost intact, and is proud of having maintained steadfastly the demands of the fundamental laws of French poetry without hurt to, or transformation of, those particular aspects and methods of thought and sentiment characteristic of every patriotic Belgian—the legacy of his race, of his Northern climate, and of that particular condition which has given his country an intermediate situation between the most powerful, as well as the most Occidental, of the Latin peoples, and the most potent of the Germanic races.

The Belgians claim that they are producing a national literature. Many influential French critics refuse to acknowledge this Belgic literary output as anything more than the transfrontier radiation of the central luminary. Other and not less

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trustworthy students declare that, meanwhile, Belgic literature is a dependent ally (still an ally, not lineal progeny), and that ere long it will probably become as distinctly and recognisably national as is possible for any literature expressed in a language which is its own by adoption only or through complex accident.

To one who has closely studied the whole movement in its intimate and extra-national bearings, as well as in its individual manifestations and aberrations, its particular and collective achievement in the several literary *genres*, there is no question as to the radical distinction between Belgic and French literature. Whether there be a great future for the first is almost entirely dependent on the concurrent political condition of Belgium. If Germany were to appropriate the country, it is almost certain that only the Flemish spirit would retain its independent vitality, and even that probably only for a generation or two. But if Belgium were absorbed by France, Brussels would almost immediately become as insignificant a literary centre as is Lyons or Bordeaux, or be, at most, not more independent of Paris than is Marseilles. Literary Belgium would be a memory

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within a year of the hoisting of the French tricolour from the Scheldt to Liège. Meanwhile the whole energy of " Young Belgium " is, consciously or unconsciously, concentrated in the effort to withstand Paris.

Of course, every one who follows the drift of Continental literature knows that Belgium is, at least, above the productive level of Portugal or Greece. But, even in France, the misapprehension is too prevalent that this sudden renaissance, amid the Flemish and Walloon " barbarians," concurs with the advent of Maurice Maeterlinck.

The author of *La Princesse Maleine* is a man of genius. His, no doubt, is the most interesting literary personality among the many more or less interesting personalities of " Young Belgium." But he is not, in his dramatic method, the absolute innovator he has been represented to be ; and he is not the chief poet of his country. In a word, he is one of a group, and is himself, as a literary force, as directly the outcome of circumstances as the group to which he adheres is the natural result of the causes which induced a Belgic renaissance.

No doubt, an adequate account of this renaissance would have to comprise the Flemish as well as the Walloon and Gallic

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aims and accomplishment. It is impracticable, naturally, to attempt even an outline of such an account in the present article. We must consider Belgic literature "d'expression française" posterior to its inoculation with its most fortunate strain, that which the critics call *le flandricisme*.

We all know the national motto of Belgium: "Union is strength." The ablest writers of the Franco-Flemish Netherlands recognised its aptness. There was no room for a national Flemish literature, nor could the Franco-Belgians hold their own against Gallic influences without alliance, and, indeed, practical identification with, the patriotic sons of Flanders. Fusion had already gone far; the new movement had begun, when, in 1881, Henri Conscience, at the end of his notable speech before the Royal Academy of Belgium, on the "*Histoire et Tendances de la Littérature Flamande*," concluded with those significant, often quoted, and, to a Belgian, inspiring words:

*Flamands, Wallons,
Ce ne sont là que des prénoms :
Belge est notre nom de famille !*

This was a note often sounded, but not listened to, throughout the country, from

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the Dutch Scheldt to the French Meuse, till Henri Conscience uttered it with an earnestness which, coming from him, carried conviction. So far back as five-and-forty years ago the Flemish poet Nolet de Brauwere urged the same plea: “Let us all put our lutes into one accord, and dedicate our music to our native land—the native land of each of us, whether Walloon or Fleming!”

No movement of vital importance is ever made. It must grow. The men must be in evidence before they congregate in a league, as there must be natural leaders in a mob or an army before manifold causes bring the needed men to the front. Thus was it with “*la Jeune Belgique*” of the *Parnasse* of 1887, the “Young Belgium” which looks to Henri Conscience and Picard with reverence, but whose aims are inspired, whose minds are influenced, whose language is coloured, by a passionate modernity which has little heed for what is of the past in point of manner and selection. The designation had been bandied about a good deal—had indeed been used as the name of a periodical—but was not of national import till the publication, in 1887, of *La Parnasse des Poètes Belges*, the *pronunciamento* by the band of writers who had definitely adopted

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the signal appellation of "La Jeune Belgique" and the implied motto *Pro Arte*.

The movement, as we now know it, may be said to begin—in so far as any complicated literary development can be said to begin in any one year, or through the propulsion of any one writer—with a significant little volume of verse published in 1876: M. Théodore Hannon's *Vingt-quatre Coups de Sonnets*. This is where we first hear definitely the new note. It is the note of Parnassien modernity—a note of revolt, a revolt as distinct from the cheap cynicism of the Byronic school as from the purely intellectual pessimism which has long been the vogue in Germany; of reversion to the old monkish doctrine that we all, men and women, are thoroughly given over to the Devil, and that no good thing can come out of modern life (with a paradoxical harping upon its carnal delights which savours of sympathetic enjoyment rather than of reprobation); and of conviction that not to be neurotic is to be outside the pale of endurable existence, and that to be a contented *bourgeois* is to be thrice damned. With this "modern note" there is always aspiration; too often, however, we find the aspiration, here among these young

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Belgians as elsewhere, somewhat *passée*, not to say got up for the occasion. Not quite infrequently, I admit, I have been reminded of a sentence in Mr. Richard Whiteing's witty and charming romance *The Island: the Adventures of a Person of Quality*: “The great mark of all progressive nations is that struggle of each man to make some other do his dirty work for him, which is commonly known as aspiration for the higher life.”

But the modern note in its wider and finer sense is also to be discerned among the Belgian authors even of the elder generation. We find it markedly, for instance, in Charles de Coster, an eminent writer with whose death in 1879 the old *régime* gave place to the new, though not rudely or abruptly, as all Belgium had in more or less degree been wrought preparedly by the genuine power and new spirit in *Légendes Flamandes* (1857), *Contes Brabançons* (1861), and particularly in his now famous *chef-d'œuvre*, *La Légende d'Ulenspiegel* (1868). This note is likewise audible, it goes almost without saying, in the work of Henri Conscience. But with these exceptions the Belgic phalanx, before 1880, was not a formidable one. So slightly were the new men recognised, that in 1880 an eminent

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critic spoke of Charles Potvin as "our best living poet"—Potvin, an able and conscientious *littérateur*, but certainly no master of words either in prose or verse. Even then certain writers had struck an unmistakable note. Even then the strong spirits of the elder and younger generation were knocking loudly at the door; and Edmond Picard, Georges Eckhoud, Max Waller, Camille Lemonnier, Georges Rodenbach, Emile Verhaeren, Charles Van Lerberghe, and others of scarce less note, had actually crossed the threshold.

"Young Belgium" was fortunate in the friends it attracted or who voluntarily welcomed it with gladly proffered aid. To two men in particular the writers of to-day owe a deep debt—to the veteran Edmond Picard, for his own able work in some degree, still more for his critical proclamations collectively entitled *Pro Arte*; and, above all, for his incessant heed and ready advice, for that sympathy and helpfulness which have won for him the appellation "the Belgic Mæcenæ"; and to the late Maurice Warlomont ("Max Waller"), the generally recognised founder of *La Jeune Belgique* as we know it to-day, a man of singular charm, ability, and influence.

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Even in Brussels (in the words of a satirical critic) one might, in 1883, have heard of the existence of the league of *les Jeunes*. The movement was then in full swing, the wave bearing on its crest, among others, Picard and Max Waller, Lemonnier and Verhaeren, and Eckhoud. With the foundation of the now rare periodical *La Pléiade*,* and its more robust *confrère La Jeune Belgique*, this movement had at last become a recognised factor. Of course absolute solidarity was not to be expected. In 1886 Camille Lemonnier went to Paris, there to begin anew a brilliant career with *Happe-Chair*, the *Germinal* of Belgium, as it has been called. There, moreover, were already domiciled Georges Rodenbach (a Franco-Flemish poet and novelist of genuine talent lost in Paris journalism), and the well-known J. K. Huysmans. Other and more serious schisms or departures took place, but the essential solidarity of the movement, more particularly in poetic literature, became

* Not to be confounded with *La Pléiade* published in Paris; though in that still rarer periodical, I may add, Maeterlinck (then content to sign his Flemish baptismal name, Mooris), and I believe also Van Lerberghe, Grégoire Le Roy, and perhaps Ephraïm Mikhael, made each his *début* in literature.

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evident by the distinctive and significant *Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique*, published, as already stated, in 1889. Thereafter it was no longer seemly even for the most adverse critics to deny that Belgium had at last produced a literature which it might fairly claim as distinctively its own.

To return to the beginning of the movement. Since what Belgian historians call their romantic epoch, the generation younger than that just on the wane at the time of the Franco-Prussian War knew only five native authors of whom it could be proud—Charles de Coster, Henri Conscience, Camille Lemonnier, Octave Pirmez, and André Van Hasselt. Of these only the third was in "war-paint" towards the end of the seventh decade of the century.

To found and carry on, in the front of organised opposition and contumely, official sneers, irresponsible enmity, and, for a time, the profound public apathy, a periodical entitled *La Jeune Belgique*, with a programme obnoxious to the great majority of possible readers, and a staff composed of writers either wholly unfamiliar or known mainly by disrepute, was a creditable as well as a hazardous undertaking. To Max Waller

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this high credit is due. At his call to arms he was joined at once by such brilliant lieutenants as Eckhoud, Albert Giraud, Émile Verhaeren, Iwan Gilkin; later by almost every poet and romancist who has made any reputation whatever. To colourless verse, to effete or anæmic prose, this phalanx, recruited and led by Max Waller, responded, says a necrologist of M. Warlomont—"par des vers puissants et des proses pleines d'exubérance, de santé et de vie."

Max Waller will always hold a high place in the history of modern Belgian literature. But he will hold it as a pioneer. In a sense he is a captain of a new departure; as Dryden was in England, as Chateaubriand was in France, as Gogol was in Russia. But he was neither a Gogol, a Chateaubriand, nor a Dryden. Meanwhile it is natural his countrymen should be kindly in their praise of his work. What he has left will not, however, survive, save for the student. When the personal tradition of the man is no longer extant he will have ceased to be remembered even by his most notable prose book, *La Vie Bête*, and possibly not even by his charming volume of verse, *Airs de Flûte*, or *Flûte à Siebel*, as it came to be called.

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That was a goodly assertion that the verse and prose of the younger men was full of exuberance, of health, and of life. Obviously, however, there are differences of opinion as to the true definition or the proper significance of these abstractions.

The two most "Parnassien" of the Parnassiens are Théodore Hannon and Iwan Gilkin. Both, moreover, are fond of insisting on exuberance (joy), health (joyous living), and life (more or less unconventional experience). One of them, indeed, wrote the eulogium of Max Waller's "phalanx." Let us glance at the poetry of these young Davids.

M. Hannon followed his *Vingt-quatre Coups de Sonnets* with his remarkable *Rimes de Joie*. This collection of verse won for him at a later date such designations as "the Belgian Laforgue," "the Belgian Rimbaud," and even "the Belgian Verlaine." But M. Hannon is not a supreme artist in words, nor has he either the poignant personal note of the poet of *Les Illuminations* or the marked individuality of the author of *Moralités Légendaires*. A nicer estimate would be one that ranked him a brilliant apprentice to the great poet of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Baudelaire, indeed,

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is the paramount influence in the moulding of the collective poetic genius of Young Belgium. Even in one point where some of our not too widely read newer critics attribute novelty to the productions of certain of the younger French and Spanish poets, to the Dutch "sensitists," and to one or two English imitators—the use of colour-words to convey particular emotions or conditions—even here the new note, clear and mellow, was sounded by Baudelaire. This impeccable artist, who so invariably adopted "des adjectifs avec préméditation," has anticipated René Ghil and a host of others in, for instance, these lines at once so lovely and so significant :

*Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies.
Les parfums, les couleurs, et les sons se répondent.*

By *Rimes de Joie* M. Hannon must not be taken as indicating "Songs of Joy." "Joie" with him has the significance of the word in another collocation—"fille de joie." His rhymes are of the gaiety, the sensuous seduction, the animal appeal, in a sense the spiritual allure, of the life which is of the flesh, of the earth earthy. He is in this respect but the

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emphasised type of his kindred among “les jeunes.” “O ! Femme, Femme ! toi qui fais l’humanité monomane !” cries Jules Laforgue in his *Moralités Légendaires*. And to a veritable obsession by “the eternal feminine” is due the most striking work of Hannon, Gilkin, and other *fin-de-siècle* poets of Belgium ; as, indeed, of the painter-etcher, Félicien Rops, and others of his kindred. This vision of animal womanhood dominates the imagination of these latter-day “barbares précieux.” For *le Nu* they have substituted *le Dénudé*. Woman is a “blanche chatte humaine” for M. Van Beers ; something between “une ange perdue et une fouine” for M. Rops ; a seductive aspect of damnation for M. Gilkin ; an expensive vice for M. Hannon ; for one or two a wandering voice from a lost land ; for others a consuming or a paralysing breath—“la voix féminine arrivée au fond des volcans et des grottes arctiques.” *

M. Huysmans is an acute and subtle critic. He deserves attention, therefore, when he writes so emphatically as he does in his prefatory note to the second (1881) edition of *Rimes de Joie*. Théodore Hannon

* A. Rimbaud, *Barbare*.

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has in his work, he says, “une saveur particulière, un goût de terroir flamand, compliqué d’un arôme très-fin de nervisme.” So far, so good. A glance will satisfy anyone as to the actuality of a particular savour in *Rimes de Joie*, though some will define it otherwise than as a delicate aroma. Again, the poet displays an extraordinary “sollicitude inquiète pour les raffinements mondains.” True, he certainly does.

En résumé, malgré ses quelques cahots de rimes et ses quelques emberlificotis de phrases, le volume est, en attendant les œuvres réalistes plus larges, plus fortes, conçues d’après un procédé que j’ignore encore, l’un des recueils de vers les plus intéressants qui aient paru depuis des années. . . . Par là, les *Rimes de Joie* se rattachent, comme une amusante fantaisie, au grand mouvement de naturalisme.

This was written in the autumn of 1879 ; it would be interesting to know what M. Huysmans would say by way of confirmation or modification in this autumn of 1893. A “proud hosannah of the flesh” (“la chair féminine,” needless to say) goes through this notable contribution “to the great movement of Naturalism.”

The Port Mignon of this poet has little

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in common with the Bimini of the dreamers.* It is probably one of those havens referred to by Ben Jonson—"the ports of Death are sins." M. Huysmans reserves his highest praise for the poem entitled *Opoponax*. It opens, according to him, with "une fanfare triomphale du cornet, peu à peu l'orchestre entier s'allume et soutient du beau fracas de ces timbales et de ces cuivres, l'hymne qui s'élance, chantant les vertus libertines du glorieux parfum." This hath a sound of nonsense. The masterpiece in question opens thus :

*Opoponax ! nom très bizarre,
Et parfum plus bizarre encor ?
Opoponax, le son du cor
Est pâle auprès de ta fanfare !*

The whole poem—as *Les Litanies de l'Absinthe*, and others of the kind—is an exposition of Baudelaire's text, "Les parfums, les couleurs, et les sons se répondent." The reader will find it, if he will—in company with eight or nine companion pieces—in the *Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique*. He can there enjoy its "abracadabrant arôme" to the full. "D'autres morceaux suivent, d'une maladie vraiment réjouissante, entr'autres,

* . . . *Port Mignon*,
Où mes désirs ont jeté l'ancre.

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le 'Maquillage,' cet extraordinaire hosannah, célébrant le charme dolent des épidermes fanés." But as a matter of fact one has soon too much of this "charme," whether "dolent" or "abracadabrant" (whatever that may mean). There are lines which even M. Huysmans qualifies as of "une corruption troublante."

The most famous thing in the book, however—a couplet that spread throughout Belgium and France with the venomous rapidity of cholera-morbus—occurs as the conclusion of a poem called *Grisaille* :

*Amour, Amour, on t'a bien dit
Un contact coûteux d'épidermes.*

Probably the cynicism of depravity has never gone beyond this. Whoever M. Hannon's *Musa Consolatrix* may be, to her is certainly applicable his lines to "une vierge Byzantine" :

*Certe elle est plus originale
Que virginale.*

It is true that in this poet's best work there is an exquisite art. *Chinoiserie* has a grace and remote charm that makes it worthy of comparison with the masterpieces in *Émaux et Camées*. But from first to last the *Rimes de Joie* are obtrusively salacious.

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They may be, like the body of the lady in *Maigreurs*, “séduisant comme un sonnet”: but—well, there are sonnets and sonnets. It is to be feared that M. Hannon, though not, I hope, one of his drear company of “buveurs de phosphore” or even a practical devotee of that absinthe whose praises he sings so ecstatically, has imbibed a perilous draught from that intoxicating stream whereby stands Woman with one hand pointing to (*vide Les Illuminations*) the flaming volcanoes, and with the other to arctic caverns.

If, as some have fancied, each of us (though for the present let us confine ourselves to saying “each poet”) has a “double” somewhere in the wide world, M. Iwan Gilkin might be taken to be the counterpart of the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*. His pessimism is not less profound. But he is a *fin-de-siècle* Belgian, and James Thomson was only a British poet who found dissipation too like unto masked tragedy to treat of it save with a deep if dramatically disguised horror. M. Iwan Gilkin is, of all the *décadents*, French or Belgian, the most sombre in his imaginings. Even in his titles he is more suggestive of Poe than of a singer of the

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joy of life. His first and in some respects his most remarkable book is called *La Damnation de l'Artiste*; his second *Ténèbres*. These young poets are either very conscious of the rare quality of their work, or are profoundly suspicious of the reluctance of their countrymen to part with their francs for “the immortal beauty of the flawless line”; for M. Iwan Gilkin deserts the usual 3 francs 50 centimes for the impressive 15 francs; M. Émile Verhaeren asks 12 francs for his *Flambeaux Noirs* or his *Débâcles*; and M. Grégoire Le Roy expects the more modest sum of 10 francs for his exposition of how *mon cœur pleure d'autrefois*.

M. Iwan Gilkin might have chosen the following sentence from Guy de Maupassant's *L'Endormeuse* as the motto of his books: “J'ai senti l'infamie trompeuse de la vie, comme personne plus que moi ne l'a sentie.” It is regrettable that his vision is often so perverted, his sentiment so morbid, his determination to be gloomy and despairing and generally “tenebrious” so obvious; for with all his shortcomings he is a poet of genuine power, and even (on his restricted highest level) of distinction. He is too much addicted—in the ironical words of M. Brunetière in his article on *Le Symbolisme*

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Contemporain (in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April 1891)—to "l'instrumentation d'un rythme polymorphe, allié d'un verbe ondulatoire." But he has a high sense of style, and, while himself possessor of a style, occasionally attains style. "Il se passionne pour la passion." He is in love with Beauty. He vibrates to the joy of life :

O bonté de la vie ! O santé du soleil !

"Come unto me," he cries in his ecstasy, "come unto me, all ye who are young and athirst for beautiful life, and I will lead you by sweet ways aflower with the breaths of lovers' kisses": "Laissez venir . . . laissez venir à moi les beaux adolescents." It is strange after this, or after such a solemn adjuration as this verse from his strange and impressive *Litanies* :

*Surnaturelle, calme et puissante Beauté,
Fontaine de santé, miroir d'étrangeté,
Ecoutez-moi !*

to find our minister of Apollo stoop to such obscure vision and dull satiety of belief as in the following (and it must be admitted equally typical) sonnet-octave :

*Dans la rue, au théâtre, au bal, je décompose
Les visages. Toujours j'y retrouve le mal,*

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*Qui sous les teints cuivrés, la graisse ou la chlorose,
Découpe en grimaçant un profil d'animal.*

*La brute qui végète au fond de l'âme impose
Au galbe lentement son rictus bestial.
L'être humain se dissout et se métamorphose
En chien, en bouc, en porc, en hyène, en chacal.*

Alas ! can it be that the wanderer by the halcyon "royaume en fleur des baisers éternels," the ecstatic poet from whose lips we heard "O bonté de la vie ! O santé du soleil !" can see nothing in humanity but irredeemable evil, must view each face of man or woman as "un profil d'animal," and can find no more generous category for his fellows than that comprising the dog, the goat, the pig, the hyena, and the jackal ! Which is *the* Iwan Gilkin : the poet of life and beauty, or the poet of decay and corruption ? One, surely, must be sincere ; the other insincere, or perversely wrought to accept mirage for reality. For this gloom of his is no lovely melancholy, that shadow of life, of joy, of beauty. It is a vision of the corruptible seen across miasma. But the author of *Ténèbres* is of the uplands by grace of his best gift ; why should he make himself one with the newt and the blind-worm ?

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M. Gilkin is fairly well represented in the *Parnasse de la Jeune Belgique*. Even in these few poems the reader will encounter many of those sonorous lines which give this young poet an almost Marlowe-like distinction :

La nuit, sur le zénith, debout comme un héraut.

*Lumineusement roule une lune coupée
Dans le silence noir et la terreur de l'air.*

*Est-ce l'ange sonnant la trompette de fer ?
Beuglant sur la cité sa clameur rauque et morne ?*

From first to last there is unmistakably something of "le goût de terroir flamand." It is no French poet

*Of the clear glow divine,
The flawless sunlit line,*

but the countryman of Van Lerberghe and Maeterlinck, who cries in his dolorous *Rime de Rêve Malheureux* :

*En toi j'adore, enfant des sinistres Destins,
L'Horreur fascinatrice et la Bizarrie.*

It is regrettable, however, that the anthology in question does not include some of the finer poems, as, for example, *Israfel* (from *La Damnation de l'Artiste*), "'mid the high amber and ebony palaces of heaven."

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To neither M. Hannon nor M. Gilkin, I am afraid, could their most enthusiastic eulogists apply what an indignant French apologist exclaimed on behalf of a "martyr's" work: "Il n'y a pas là de quoi faire rougir une épicière, ou pâlir un gendarme." Truth to tell, much of this maladroitness in handling of salacious themes is altogether remote from a purely artistic passion for the beautiful in any guise. Too often it is mere vulgarity. In a sense the most regrettable thing is not the vulgarity, but the author's ignorance that they are dismounted from Pegasus and are standing in the mire. Good for both the poets just named, and for so many other of their *confrères*, would be a breath of that "élan génial"—in the words of Erastène Ramiro—"cet élan génial, qui chasse, comme un vent irrésistible, les scories des impressions vulgaires."

M. Iwan Gilkin, however, was hardly one of the inaugurators of the new movement. Before 1880 Rodenbach had published his (somewhat mediocre) *Tristesses* and other volumes, and Eckhoud his sole collection of verse, *Myrtes et Cyprès*, and other books. Strangely enough to those who are not *au courant* with everything concerning "La

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Jeune Belgique," neither is represented in the *Parnasse*. The omission of the author of *La Jeunesse Blanche* and *Le Règne du Silence* is certainly a mistake. These books have a remote dreamy beauty, constantly reminiscent of and inspired by the old dead cities of Flanders—reflecting, as the un-rippled waters of those deserted towns,

Des nuages, des tours et de longs peupliers.

As a novelist, also, Georges Rodenbach is worthy of note. His *Art en Exil* is as unlike conventional French fiction as his most exigent Flemish compatriot could wish. But, both as poet and novelist, he is hopelessly adrift in the maelstrom of Paris journalism. As for the exclusion of Georges Eckhoud, that may be on account of the eminent novelist's not being considered as a poet at all. From this opinion no unbiassed critic could differ. Eckhoud, the Maupassant of the Low Countries, the literary historian, looms gigantic in the van of the Belgian renaissance; Eckhoud, the author of *Myrtes et Cyprès*, &c., is insignificant. The gulf is as wide as that which divides Mr. Lecky the historian from Mr. Lecky the writer in verse. But I remember at least one light and dexterous poem (*Xaviola*), of

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an easy grace and the happiest *insouciance*, though I can recall only a stanza—one that hummed in my ears for days after I first read it :

*Si l'anecdote est légère,
Excusez-moi, très-cher frère
Jésuite, pardonnez-moi :
On était sous la Régence.
Les mœurs ont changé, je pense ;
On suit mieux la sainte loi.
Mon cher frère, excusez-moi.*

It is not in verse, however, but in the prose of *Kees Dovorik*, *Kermesses*, *Nouvelles Kermesses*, *La Nouvelle Carthage*, *Le Cycle Patibulaire*, that one must study this powerful though gloomy writer. The *conteurs* of Belgium are a small but really noteworthy body. After Eckhoud, let me recommend to those readers who may be unacquainted with the Belgian writers Louis Delattre's *Contes de mon Village*, and Eugène Demolder's *Contes d'Yperdamme*. The latter is a model of its kind. Mention should also be made of the *Contes à Marjolaine* and *Les Charneux* of Georges Garnir, that “Wallon Wallonais” ; Albert Giraud's *Le Scribe*, &c., and Henry Maubel's *Quelqu'un d'aujourd'hui* and singularly charming *Miette*. There are many others, but these seem to

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me particularly representative. Among the several writers of that species of *conte*, or allegory or fantasy, now generally called “*proses-lyriques*”—a *genre* cultivated among the young Belgian poets and roman-cists with singular success—I must mention especially M. Arnold Goffin. Excellent and suggestive as are *Delzire Moris*, *Journal d'André*, and *Maxime*, this most able writer is seen at his highest artistic attainment in the charming *contes* of his recently published *Le Fou Raisonnable*. In point of art, no living Frenchman has, in this particular *genre*, excelled this series, unless, perhaps, Marcel Schwob in his *Mîmes*.

Apart from those already specially alluded to, the most distinguished of the Parnassiens are Fernand Severin, Grégoire Le Roy, André Fontainas, and Albert Giraud. Of these, only the first has any suggestion of what can fairly be called genius. His *Le Lys* and *Le Don d'Enfance* contain poetry of great beauty, with an exquisite sense for nature, the more appellant because the poet does not describe but always evokes the scene, the fleeting aspect, the quint-essential moment. Grégoire Le Roy's *Mon Cœur pleure d'autrefois* is full of delicate fancy and seductive phrasing, but in the

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overwhelming pressure of excellent poetic writing in French he cannot be singled out for special honour. Albert Giraud is probably more widely appreciated as a roman-cist and critic than as a poet, though a poet the author of *Hors du Siècle*, *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Pierrot Narcisse*, and *Dernières Fêtes* unquestionably is. M. Giraud is one of the sanest and surest critics of literature now writing in French. Fontainas may yet distinguish himself; Émile Verhaeren (who is so much in sympathy with, though not included in, “*La Jeune Belgique*”) has already done so in, particularly, *Les Flambeaux Noirs* and *Les Débâcles*. Léon Montenaeken deserves mention. No Belgian has a lighter touch, a sweeter, if restricted, lilt. The following haunting little song by him has been attributed to a dozen different French poets, old and latter-day, and, if I am not mistaken, even Mr. Andrew Lang fathered it on some innocent Frenchman:

PEU DE CHOSE

*La vie est vaine :
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine . . .
Et puis—bonjour !*

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*La vie est brève :
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve . . .
Et puis—bon soir !*

But in the *Parnasse* list there are two names of supreme importance in the history of the Belgian renaissance, though neither of commanding rank in metrical composition : Charles Van Lerberghe and Maurice Maeterlinck. To these should be added the lesser but still noteworthy name of a third exponent of the *drame intime*, Auguste Jenart : a writer whose neglect by his fellows and the Belgian public has always to me been a source of surprise.

It is disappointing to find in the poetry of two such potent literary temperaments so little of the same distinctive quality as is readily discernible in the respective dramatic work of either. It need scarce detain us at present. I must add that I know too little of M. Van Lerberghe's uncollected verse to attempt to judge it adequately. He betrays a marked *rap-prochement* to Rossetti, and, to a certain extent, to Poe. Most of M. Van Lerberghe's published metrical work, I assume, may be read in the *Parnasse*. It is graceful and has an individual charm in such poems as

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La Dévine and *Un Bois Dormant*; while in *Solyane* there is an echo of that austere style which characterises his dramatic masterpiece. Maeterlinck is, perhaps, more natively the poet. He shows himself an unmistakable and, as yet, very limited poet in *Serres Chaudes*; he displays promise as a *conteur* in his extremely clever if fantastically archaic *Massacre des Innocents*, *Onirologie*, &c.; and he has won a place as a critical writer by his scholarly monograph on Ruysbroëck l'Admirable and his occasional studies of contemporary literature. But it is as an imaginative writer in rarefied prose wrought in the dramatic form that he is a newcomer of distinction, of genius, and is a literary force which has to be reckoned with. As he is represented in the *Parnasse* by about a third of his unique volume of verse, and presumably by pieces chosen by himself, he may be said to be fairly represented. Unlikely masters are suggested in these poems: poets so distinct as Walt Whitman and Edgar Poe. Without his beloved “cygnes” and his exclamation marks Maeterlinck would be heavily handicapped. “Swans” are now as commonplace (though apparently as inevitable) in Belgian verse

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as the breeze in the trees in our albums and animals fifty years ago. It would be absolutely safe to say that no Belgian volume of poetry has appeared without "cygnes," "mensonges," "désirs fauves," "mon âme pâle," and "femmes lasciveuses" (or other expressive epithet). "O" is a deadly pitfall for all "Young Belgium," and exclamation marks should be looked at by them with the same menacing disapproval (if secret longing) as our Academical painters (no doubt) regard the labour-saving photograph. In one of these poems of *Serres Chaudes* alone, consisting as it does of forty-one lines, I have counted no fewer than twenty-nine terminal exclamation marks. In the same poem, three lines begin with "Oh," six with "A," and nineteen with "Et." This is not art, but artifice: that is, the mechanical substitute for art. Those repetitive phrasings which Maeterlinck uses with such effect (though sometimes disenchantingly) in *La Princesse Maleine*, *Les Aveugles*, *L'Intruse*, *Les Sept Princesses*, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*, are also much affected by him in these poems—sometimes, as in *Ennui*, by monotonous insistence upon a single word, or noun and epithet: in this instance "paon blanc." It is impossible to

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read these hothouse blooms of poetry without wishing for the author that "wind Euroclydon" for which, he tells us, in the opening of *Âme*, he holds himself ready. For, truly, his soul is too much in the shade: "Mon âme! . . . O mon âme vraiment trop à l'abri!"

The real distinction of the contemporary literary movement in Belgium lies in the *drame intime*. This particular form of imaginative literature has been given new life and significance by Maeterlinck—Maeterlinck inspired by Charles Van Lerberghe. It has already had a strong influence on recent French literature, though naturally the Belgian origin of this influence is not recognised readily in France. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Broadly, the Belgian movement culminates in this new form—relatively new, that is to say. It is a form strangely seductive if obviously perilous, and one that has, probably, a remarkable future—coming, as it has done, at a time when our most eager spirits are solicitous of a wider scope in expression, for a further opening up of alluring ways through the ever-blossoming wilderness of art. It may well be that Maeterlinck's highest service will

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prove to be that of a pioneer—as Bernardin de St. Pierre's highest service has not been by *Paul et Virginie*, but by his *Études de Nature*, having therewith directed into new and fresh channels of delight the stream which threatened to stagnate in the shallows of an insincere nature-convention. For, highly suggestive, profoundly interesting, and even fascinating as his best work is, he does not "loom forth the master."

"C'est l'opérette de la décadence, après le drame de Baudelaire," wrote E. Picard of the *début* of "Young Belgium." Baudelaire is, in truth, even yet the tutelary god of "La Jeune Belgique." In the perusal of the writings of the league one almost inevitably comes to identify the great French poet with the nation among whom he sojourned awhile in anything but unalloyed joy—as the Germans, in that Bavarian Walhalla by the Danube, have included Shakespeare among their effigies of Teutonic celebrities. There are critics who believe that Maurice Maeterlinck will oust the alien master from his sovereignty — somewhat forgetful, meanwhile, of the fact that the relationship is not closer between these two men than between a sculptor and a painter working

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differently under a common bond. That able Belgian critic, M. Albert Arnay, believes Maeterlinck to be “among the giants.” For myself I can regard him only as a worthy forerunner of a greater than himself. Yet—he is young, he is still in time to unlearn as well as to learn, he enjoys what is for him a fortunate environment, he has had fit training; he has a strain, perhaps very much more than a strain, of genius. With his supreme advantages he *may* yet appear to his countrymen, to the world, as he now does to such critics as M. Arnay in Belgium and M. Mirbeau in France.

It is strange that the imaginative writer who first showed Maeterlinck the method and allure of that peculiar dramatic form with which the younger man is identified should be so little known. Strange, too, that he should be so austere and reticent, for Charles Van Lerberghe has published no book since *Les Fleurs*, that epoch-marking *drame intime*, brief as it is. Here for the first time we encounter the dramatic method which has so impressed readers of Maeterlinck’s dramas and episodes. Van Lerberghe does not appear to have followed any other writer in his own country or abroad. Possibly he has taken a hint

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from Calderon. There are in that writer's plays dramatic interludes of an extraordinary intensity. It is not improbable that the Flemish poet, a curious student of foreign literature, should have noted the aptitude of this specific form of composition for the expression of a certain quality of imaginative thought or emotion not so adequately to be rendered in verse, or even in highly rarefied prose-narrative.

The short dramatic episode entitled *Les Flaireurs* occupies itself with a single incident: the death of an old peasant woman, by night, in a lonely cottage in a remote district, with no companion save her girlish grandchild. Almost from the outset the reader guesses what the nocturnal voices indicate. The ruse of the dramatist is almost childishly simple, if its process of development be regarded in detail. The impressiveness lies greatly in the cumulative effect. A night of storm, the rain lashing at the windows, the appalling darkness without, the wan candle-glow within, a terrified and bewildered child, a dying and delirious old woman, an ominous, oft-repeated knocking at the door, a hoarse voice without, changeful but always menacing, mocking or muttering an obscure and horrible message: this inter-

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wrought, again and again represented, austere tragic by-play—from one point of view merely the material for tragedy—is a profoundly impressive work of art. It is perhaps all the more so from the fact that it relies to some extent upon certain venerable and even outworn conventionalities. The midnight hour, storm, mysterious sounds, the howl of a dog—we are familiar with all these “properties.” They do not now move us. Sheridan Le Fanu, or Fitzjames O’Brien, or R. L. Stevenson, can create for us an inward terror far beyond the half-simulated creep with which we read the conventional bogey-story. That Charles Van Lerberghe should so impress us by the simplest and most familiar stage tricks points to his genuine artistry, to his essential masterhood. The literary conjurer would fain deceive us by sleight of hand; the literary artist persuades us by sleight of mind.

Van Lerberghe is neither romanticist nor realist as these vague and often identical terms are understood abroad. He works realistically in the sphere of the imaginary. If it were not that his aim (as that of Maeterlinck) is to bring into literature a new form of the *drame intime*, with, mean-

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while, the adventitious aid of nominal stage accessories, one might almost think that *Les Fleurs* was meant for stage representation. It would be impossible, however, thus. Imagine the incongruity of the opening of this drama with its subject.

"Orchestral music. Funeral march. Roll of muffled drums. A blast of a horn in the distance. Roll of drums. A short psalmodic motive for the organ. REPEATED KNOCKS, HEAVY AND DULL. *Curtain.*" What have orchestral music and rolling of drums and a psalmodic motive for the organ to do with an old peasant woman dying in a cottage? For that stage of the imagination from which many of us derive a keener pleasure than from that of any theatre, there is perhaps nothing incongruous here. The effect sought to be produced is a psychic one; and, if produced, the end is gained, and the means of no moment. It is only from this standpoint that we can view aright the work of Van Lerberghe, Maeterlinck, and Auguste Jenart. *Les Fleurs* is wholly unsuitable for the actual stage, as unsuitable as *L'Intruse*, or *Les Aveugles*, or *Les Sept Princesses*, or *Le Barbare*. Each needs to be enacted in the shadow-haunted

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glade of the imagination, in order to be understood aright. Under the limelight their terror becomes folly, their poetry rhetoric, their tragic significance impotent commonplace, their atmosphere of mystery the common air of the squalidly apparent, their impressiveness a cause of mocking.

Of the strange drama of Auguste Jenart I can say little here. In its own kind it seems to me genuinely impressive. Nevertheless, it is ill sustained; here and there it even passes into rhodomontade. The author has obviously been influenced by Maeterlinck as well as by Van Lerberghe, though the peril of the quest for derivation is exemplified in a recent allusion to *Le Barbare* as an indifferent production clearly inspired by such compositions as *Les Sept Princesses* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*—the critic oblivious of the fact that the first appeared in 1891, a few months after Jenart's drama, and the second in 1892. *Le Barbare* is a study in psychic heredity, in atavism. It is as remote in style and conception from Ibsen's *Ghosts*, on the one hand, as, on the other, from such works as Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* series, the Goncourt's *Germinie Lacerteuse*, or Huysman's *À Rebours*. The

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inevitableness is not less convincing because the action is mainly mental and spiritual rather than personal in the restricted bodily sense. A profoundly imaginative gloom lies over this tragedy of Rynel de Roncort—the last exhausted scion of a noble race. In a sense, *Le Barbare* is a poetic version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. It is an individual episode of the universal war of good and evil for supremacy. Only here, as Rynel would say, it is not one man struggling against inborn tendencies and adverse circumstances, but the heritor of ancestral passions and desires, insensate cravings, and inarticulate longings, battling wildly against this overwhelming past, and striving against or yielding before the inevitable. "Connais-tu la Puissance ténébreuse qui trame nos destinées? Pourquoi lutter contre elle?" Rynel cries. Again with a despairing sense of futility: "Des vies antérieures sont innombrablement présentes en moi." The inner motive of *Le Barbare* is revealed in such a sentence as that of Nurh, the strange, dreamlike beloved of Rynel: "There are graves below the nerves whence mount the desires of the dead." The dominant note in this sombre symphony of despair is that ceaseless cry of Rynel:

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"Eveille-moi du somnambulisme de cette vie !"

Le Barbare has obvious faults. Notably Jenart, like Maeterlinck, trusts too often and too much to effects of repetition.

SIRIA. *Vous appartiendrez bientôt à un autre.*

NURH. *Jamais ! Jamais ! Jamais !*

SIRIA. *Vous ne l'aimez pas ! Vous ne l'aimez pas ! Vous ne l'aimez pas !*

A little of this interjectional repetition is effective : a little more, and it is no longer so. It soon becomes dulled—as that Sultan's scimitar which could raze the fluff from a falling feather at the first sweep, cleave the feather-quill at the second, and at the third merely whirl aside the drifting flake.

Perhaps the most notable thing in *Le Barbare* from the point of view of the literary student is the poetic and singularly impressive way in which the animate and inanimate environment of the personages of the drama play their part in the general scheme of psychic effect. The wind, snow, the tempest, the water of the lake that clucks and gurgles below the stairs of Rynel's castle, the old tapestries, the firelight, the deep gloom of chill rooms, the ominous silence, the leaping or crawling of shadows—

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of *La Princesse Maleine* first began to write ; but I remember that there appeared early in 1886, in a long since defunct Paris periodical, one of the most striking of his prose studies. At that date Maeterlinck was so exigent in the matter of his Flemish nationality that he signed his poems and articles “Mooris Maeterlinck.” The “Maurice” came later when he found that a Belgian wrote and spoke a universal tongue, and a Fleming what from a broad standpoint can be called only a provincial dialect. So far back as 1886 “Mooris Maeterlinck” projected, and, indeed, announced, two volumes : one, a collection of poems under the general title *Les Symboliques*, and the other *Histoires Gothiques*, to comprise several imaginative and more or less fantastic prose studies. Neither book has yet appeared. At any rate the *Histoires Gothiques* has not ; for it is possible that this author’s sole published volume of verse, *Serres Chaudes*, contains the essential part of what was to appear in *Les Symboliques*. There are two things essential to a proper understanding of this author’s writings : some knowledge of the complex circumstances which have made him what he is, of his avowed aims and obvious tendencies,

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and some acquaintance with the literary movement of which he is but one among several, and, indeed, with the immediate derivations and remoter origins of this movement. For, if ever a writer was the direct outcome of visible shaping influences, it is Maurice Maeterlinck. Moreover, he is not yet thirty, and, notwithstanding *Les Aveugles*, *L'Intruse*, *La Princesse Maleine*, and *Les Sept Princesses*, he has not yet found himself.

A strain of English blood, I understand, runs in the veins of M. Maeterlinck. Howsoever this may be, his literary inheritance is markedly English. He himself admits this; and it is doubtful if any Continental writer, even M. Paul Bourget, is more intimate not only with our latter-day poets, but with the superb wilderness of Elizabethan literature itself. True, there is his admission about his debt to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and during a seven months' residence in Paris (in 1886) he saw a good deal of this fascinating if sometimes disappointing writer, whom he so much admires:

"Je voyais très souvent Villiers de l'Isle-Adam pendant les sept mois qui j'ai passés à Paris. C'était à la brasserie Pousset, au faubourg Montmartre. Il y avait là Saint-

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Pol-Roux, Mikhaël, Quillard, Darzens ; Mendès y passait quelquefois, toujours charmeur. Tout ce que j'ai fait, c'est à Villiers que je le dois, à ses conversations plus qu'à ses œuvres que j'admire beaucoup d'ailleurs.”

In a word, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam was to him much what Gustave Flaubert was to Guy de Maupassant, a dominating personal influence. But he has testified again and again to the supreme magnitude of his debt to “Shakspere, surtout ! Shakspere !” A comparison with something by Shakespeare or one of the Elizabethans is as natural to him as to Swinburne. Thus, in a remarkable critical article (*La Damnation de l'Artiste*) :

“Il y a là un tragique interne implacablement compact, mercuriel, vénéneux, et qui fait songer à l'envers psychologique d'une de ces inhabitables tragédies du sombre contemporain de Shakspere, l'irrespirable Cyril Tourneur.”

After Shakespeare, his acknowledged indebtedness is to De Quincey, Rossetti, and Edgar Allan Poe, and, intellectually, to Carlyle among other English writers ; among French, pre-eminently to his friend and countryman, Charles Van Lerberghe,

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in some measure to Baudelaire, and more markedly to certain of the younger men, notably Stéphane Mallarmé and Jules Laforgue; among Germans, distinctly to Schopenhauer. But, after Shakespeare, it is chiefly from Rossetti and Poe—from Poe and Rossetti would be nearer the mark—that he derives that temperamental excitement to which is due no small portion of his work. In both instances he seems to me to have assimilated weakness rather than strength. He has been deeply impressed by the author of *The House of Life*, but it is not the real massiveness underlying the overwrought surface of Rossetti's work that has most appealed to him. His radical danger is uncontrolled imagination. In his latest work, published in 1892, this is again and emphatically demonstrated. *Les Sept Princesses* has grace, a strange indefinable haunting charm, and once or twice a touch of power; and having this, it has much. But no dramatic presentment so essentially undramatic, no imaginative effort so uncontrolled by the saving sense of the artistically incongruous, can take rank as a notable achievement. Nevertheless, to the student of Maeterlinck's achievement as a whole, *Les Sept Princesses* is of special

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interest, though it has the faults, exaggerated in some respects, of its predecessor *La Princesse Maleine*. Neither play is in the exact sense a drama. In both works, as M. Arnay indicated at the time of the appearance of the earlier, Maeterlinck has been eager to seek and demonstrate what he himself calls somewhere "l'innombrable inconnu des pressentiments," undeterred by the example of Shakespeare and De Quincey. But a keen apprehension of the value of rare dramatic effects does not involve the capacity of application, and again and again in *La Princesse Maleine* the author has failed, either by crude obtrusion of this or that "point," or by elaboration. The murder-scene in the dark chamber of Maleine is more horrible than terrible; the evil Queen Ann is a vulgar murderess, not a soul wrought to tragic fury; and King Hjalmar is fantastic rather than convincing.

It is not, however, in *La Princesse Maleine* that Maeterlinck's highest achievement is to be found. In those extraordinary dramatic phantasies, at once so mechanical in structure and so imaginatively persuasive, *Les Aveugles* and *L'Intruse*, he not only reaches a higher artistic level, but more adequately fulfils his

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aim than in the longer and more ambitious and essentially more conventional work. But it is altogether a mistake to criticise Maeterlinck the writer of imaginative dramatic prose as though he were Maeterlinck the playwright.

In each composition he attempted to produce certain effects ; and to this end he wrought with a subtle skill so individual because so truly artistic that it defies, or at any rate has as yet defied, translation.

I believe he will give us better work ; work as distinctive as his two masterpieces, *L'Intruse* and *Les Aveugles*, but with a wider range, a sympathy more general, and insight and apprehension and technical accomplishment more masterly still.

For him, however, as for all, there is the rock-ahead of a misleading conception of originality. The originality which lies in the formative vision is that which is of paramount value, not that which is preoccupied with mere novelty of presentment. In the words of M. Theodore de Wyzewa in a recent suggestive article in *Le Mercure de France* : “ Cette décroissance de l'originalité intérieure, et ce souci croissant de l'originalité extérieure, ce sont les deux faits qui resument toute l'histoire de l'art

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contemporain, aussi bien à l'étranger qu'chez nous.”

If for Maeterlinck himself the warning be not called for, certainly for most of *les Jeunes* in Belgium and France there is need to remember, to take to heart, the scornful words of a great literary artist admired of them all :

*Dors ! L'impure laideur est la reine du monde,
Et nous avons perdu le chemin de Paros.*

It is not the least of M. Maeterlinck's honours that he is worthy to be ranged under the banner of Leconte de Lisle.

But what we have to bear in mind meanwhile is that a new method is coming into literature, and that the way has been shown by the “*Jeune Belgique*” pioneers. Maurice Maeterlinck is one of those pioneers, and one deserving of singular honour ; for it is not in the accidents of his dramatic expression that he is the original writer, but in that quality of insight, that phrasing, that atmosphere, which is his own.

SAINTE-BEUVE

AMONG the innumerable apt quotations from Sainte-Beuve with which an essay upon that sovereign critic might fittingly be introduced, I doubt if there be any better than this : " I have but one diversion, one pursuit : I analyse, I botanise, I am a naturalist of minds. What I would fain create is Literary Natural History." He was, and is, unquestionably the foremost "naturaliste des esprits" : in literary natural history he is at once the Buffon and Humboldt, the Linnæus and Cuvier, the Darwin even, of scientific criticism. He was not a great inventor, a new creative force, it is true ; but he was, so to say, one of the foremost practical engineers in literature,—he altered the course of the alien stream of criticism, compelled its waters to be tributary to the main river, and gave it a new impetus, an irresistible energy, a fresh and vital importance.

I

During the ten or twelve years in which I have been a systematic reader of Sainte-Beuve, I have often wondered if his literary career would have been a very different one from what we know it if he had been born ere the parental tides of life were already on the ebb. Students of physiology are well aware of the fact that children born of parents beyond the prime of life are, in the first degree, inferior in physique to those born, say, to a father of thirty years of age, and to a mother five-and-twenty years old ; and, in the second degree, that the children of parents married after the prime of life are, as a rule, less emotional than those born of a union in the more ardent and excitable years of youth. It is because in the *Life, Poems, and Thoughts of Joseph Delorme*, in *Les Consolations*, in the *Pensées d'Août*, I for one find so much which is praiseworthy, which is excellent even, that I have often wondered if, his natal circumstances having been other than they were, the author who has become so celebrated for his inimitable *Causeries du Lundi* might have become famous as a poet. That the keen subjectivity of emotion

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which is at the base of the poetic nature was his may be inferred from a hundred hints throughout his writings; he was very far from being what some one has called him, a "mere bloodless critic, serenely impartial because of his imperturbable pulse." To cite a single example: in one of his *Notes et Remarques*, printed in M. Pierrot's appendical volume (tome xvi^m.) to the collected *Causeries du Lundi*, he says, *à propos* of his novel *Volupté*: "Why do I not write another novel? To write a romance was for me but another, an indirect way of being in love, and to say so." It was not "a mere bloodless critic" who penned that remark. But, withal, in his poetry, in his essays, in his critiques, in the episodes of his long and intellectually active life, it is obvious to the discerning reader that Sainte-Beuve rarely attained to the white-heat of emotion for any length of time; that a cold wave of serene judgment, of *ennui* often enough, speedily dissipated the intoxication of spiritual ardour. But in those white-heat moments he touches so fine a note, reaches so high a level, that one realises the poet within him is not buried so deep below his ordinary self as the common judgment would have us believe. The

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century has been rich in poetic literature, while there have been few eminent critics,—till Sainte-Beuve no French critic great by virtue of the art of criticism alone. It is only since the advent of Sainte-Beuve, indeed, that criticism has come to be accepted as an art—that is, in France ; for amongst us criticism, as distinct from conventional book-reviewing, can at most be said merely to exist.

In the invaluable autobiographical fragment which was found among his papers on the morrow of his death, Sainte-Beuve states that he was brought up by his mother, who had been left, a few months after her marriage, a widow with sadly straitened means yet not in extreme poverty, and by a sister of his father, who united her slender income to that of Mme. Sainte-Beuve, thus enabling the small family of three to live in comparative comfort. The boy was carefully educated at the lay school of a M. Blériot, and was particularly well grounded in Latin. His intellectual development was rapid. He had scarcely entered upon his teens before he had become a student, and his mother, sympathetic and intelligent if not actively intellectual, gave him every encouragement. It was at this time that

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he read many of the books which bore his father's marginalia ; and no doubt the mere circumstance of annotation impressed him with the importance of the subject-matter. Some ten years or so later he alluded, in one of his poems, to his father and his indirect influence upon him :

*" Mon père ainsi sentait. Si, né dans sa mort même,
Ma mémoire n'eut pas son image suprême,
Il m'a laissé du moins son âme et son esprit,
Et son goût tout entier à chaque marge écrit."*

What is even more noteworthy is his consciousness of his educational shortcomings when, in his fourteenth year, he realised that he was not likely to learn anything more at M. Blériot's school. " I felt strongly how much I lacked " : and in this persuasion he urged his mother to take, or send, him to Paris. It was not an easy thing for the widow to do, but she managed to send him to the capital (September 1818), and to arrange for his board with a M. Landry, a man of some note, who had formerly been a professor at the College of Louis-le-Grand, and was a mathematician and philosopher. At the house of this *esprit libre* in the Rue de la Cerisail—this free-thinker, as Sainte-Beuve calls him—the young scholar met

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several men of high standing in the world of letters, among them certain eminent students of science. He seems to have been noticed by them, though he did not quite relish being treated as a hobbledehoy, "as a big boy, as a little man." He was an instinctive student: to learn was as natural to him as to play is easy for most boys, and yet he does not seem to have been devoid of the gaiety and even *abandon* of youth. At the College of Charlemagne, at the end of the first year of his attendance, he took part in the general competition and succeeded in carrying off the highest prize for history; and in the following year, at the Bourbon College, he gained the prize for Latin verse, and had the further distinction of a Governmental award, in the form of a medal, as a special recognition of his scholarly achievements. One of his school friends, Charles Potier, the son of the eminent actor, and himself afterwards successful on the stage, has put on record his recollection of how he and Sainte-Beuve acted the familiar old parts of the clever and the stupid boy; how while he dug or hoed the garden-plot which had been allotted to them, the other Charles sat idly by, obviously engaged in some book or

indolently abstracted ; and how, in return, he was helped by his friend in the uncongenial task of class-exercises. Sainte-Beuve was free to spend his evenings as he chose, and he voluntarily studied medical science, at first with the full intention of becoming a physician, later with the idea of making the philosophical study of physiology and chemistry his specialities, and, finally, simply for the value of the training and its bearing upon that new science of literature which he was one of the earliest to apprehend as a complex unity. The lectures of Messieurs Magendie, Robiquet, and Blainville, respectively upon physiology, chemistry, and natural history, interested him profoundly. "I went every evening to these lectures at the *Athénée*, off the Palais Royal, from seven to ten o'clock," he says in his autobiographical fragment, "and also to some literary lectures." It was natural that this preoccupation with strictly scientific study should bias his mind to the materialistic school of thought ; and one is not surprised to learn, on the authority of D'Haussonville, his biographer, that in his own judgment he had reached his true ground, "*mon fonds véritable*," in the most pronounced eighteenth-century materialism. It is, however,

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interesting and suggestive to note that even at that time Sainte-Beuve was dominated by his exceptional mental receptivity ; that he was swayed this way and that by the intellectual duality which has puzzled so many of his readers. Daunou and Lamarck were his prophets ; by them he swore, their words contained the authentic gospel ; but the same week, perhaps, as that in which he proclaimed his enfranchisement from the most abstract Deism, he would announce his conviction that a Supreme Power controlled the tides of life—as when he wrote to his friend, afterwards the Abbé Barbe, distinctly asserting his recognition of God as “the source of all things.” The mystic in him was always side by side with the physiologist, the unflinching analyst, just as the poet was ever comrade to the critic. It is to this, indeed, that Sainte-Beuve owes his pre-eminence, to this that is to be traced the fundamental secret of his spell. In later life he was fully conscious of his indebtedness to those early medical and scientific studies ; and many will call to mind his famous defence of the Faculty, in the Senate of the Second Empire, when an attempt was made to limit the medical professors in Governmental institutions in

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the free expression of their views. The very least he could do, he declared, was to give his testimony in favour of that Faculty to which he owed the philosophical spirit, the love of exactitude and of physiological reality, and "such good method as may have entered into my writings." As a matter of fact, his early scientific training was of the highest value. It is possible that, with his strong religious bias, if he had been educated at an ecclesiastical seminary he would have become one of the great company led by Pascal and Bossuet, a spiritual comrade of his contemporaries Lamennais and Lacordaire ; that, but for his *liaison* with radical materialism, the art, the science of Criticism, would have remained half formless and indeterminate, and have waited long for its first great master.

His several scientific excursions led to his following the regular course in the study of medicine ; and, with the goal of a medical career in view, he was an assiduous student till 1827, when he was in his twenty-third year. At that date an event occurred which determined his particular line of energy. But before this he had already begun to write. These tentative efforts, in verse and prose, conventional though they were,

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encouraged him to believe that he had the literary faculty, though even then his sense of style was so developed that he realised how wide was the gulf between mere facility and a vital dominating impulse. His mother, who had come from Boulogne to watch over her son, saw these literary indications with an annoyance which grew into alarm; for at that time the literary career was rarely a remunerative one, and, moreover, her heart was set upon her son's success as a physician or collegiate professor of medicine. It was not, as a matter of fact, till his election to the Academy that she admitted the wisdom of his early decision; and even then she complained, and not without justice, of the terrible wear and tear of an unceasingly active literary life. Mme. Sainte-Beuve, who lived with her son till her death at the goodly age of eighty-six, seems to have been an intelligent and sympathetic rather than an intellectually clever woman; and though her always affectionate Charles loved and admired her, it would not appear that he enjoyed with her any rare mental communion.

The youth who at the College of Charlemagne had gained the History prize attracted

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the particular attention of his professor, M. Dubois. A friendship, as intimate as practicable in the circumstances, ensued ; and when, in 1824, M. Dubois founded the *Globe*, the journal which ere long became so famous and so influential both in politics and literature, he asked Sainte-Beuve to join the staff as an occasional contributor. This was a remarkable compliment, for the young student was quite unknown, and had done nothing to warrant such an honour ; so it is clear that M. Dubois must have had a strong opinion as to the young man's capabilities. Sainte-Beuve was all the more gratified because the staff of writers who had promised their practical support comprised men so famous as Guizot and Victor Cousin, Jouffroy, Ampère, Mérimée, De Broglie, and Villemain. It was not long before the *Globe* became a power in Paris, and thereafter throughout France and Northern Europe : even the great Goethe read it regularly, and alluded to it in terms of cordial praise. It was regarded as the organ of the principal exponents of that earlier Romantic movement which made the latter years of the Restoration so brilliant, and worked like powerful yeast through contemporary thought and literature. Politically, it was

the mouthpiece of those who were characterised as *les Doctrinaires*. Naturally the young medical student, who had scarce unsheathed his virginal literary sword, was not among the first contributors. When M. Dubois did entrust to him several short reviews, he did not allow these to appear without scrupulous revision on his own part. They did not attract any particular notice : few were curious as to the personality of the critic whose articles appeared above the initials "S. B." But the editor soon discovered that his youngest contributor was quite able to stand alone so far as literary craftsmanship was concerned. One day he delighted the novice by saying to him, "*Now* you know how to write ; henceforth you can go alone." Confidence helped style, and Parisian men of letters read with appreciative interest the new recruit's articles on Thiers' *Histoire de la Révolution* and Mignet's *Tableau* of the same epoch. He may be said to have definitely gained his place as a recognised literary critic by the time that he had published his able and scholarly review of Alfred de Vigny's *Cinq Mars*. It was still before he had finally given up a medical career that, by means of a review, he formed a new acquaintanceship

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which was to prove of great importance to him, and that not only as a man of letters. One morning, late in 1826, he chanced to call upon M. Dubois, who was engaged in turning over the pages of two volumes of *Odes and Ballads*, which he had just received. The editor of the *Globe* asked Sainte-Beuve to review them, having first explained that they were by an acquaintance of his, "a young barbarian of talent," interesting on account of his forceful character and the incidents of his life—Victor Hugo. The volumes were duly carried off, read, re-read and reviewed. When the critic took his MS. to his editor he told the latter that this Victor Hugo was not such a barbarian after all, but a man of genius. The review appeared in the issue of the *Globe* for January 2, 1827; and it is interesting to know that among the earliest foreign readers of it was Goethe, who on the 4th expressed to Eckermann his appreciation of Hugo, and his belief that the young poet's fortunes were assured since he had the *Globe* on his side. And of course the author of *Odes et Ballades* was delighted. He called upon M. Dubois, enthusiastically expressed his gratification, maugre the few strictures upon his poetic and metrical extravagances

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which the article contained, and begged for the address of the writer. The critic was out when the poet called, but a return visit was speedily made. No doubt Sainte-Beuve was not the man to regret any useful experience, and yet one may question, from knowledge of the man in his later years, if, could he have relieved and at the same time refashioned the drift of his life, he would have made that eventful call. From it, indirectly, arose his "one critical crime," that of wilful blindness to shortcomings because of the influence of personal charm; and to it, also, was due the "romantic" prose and poetry of the morbid and supersensitive Joseph Delorme. Poetically, in a word, he would not have had what he calls somewhere his "*liaison avec l'école poétique de Victor Hugo*." On the other hand, he owed much to his intimacy with the Hugos and their circle, which at that time comprised Alfred de Vigny, Lamartine, Musset, and other ardent representatives of *Jeune France*. The recollection of his critical reception of Alfred de Musset was always, in late years, one of Sainte-Beuve's thorns in the flesh. But the accusation which has been made, that he was chagrined by the poet's manner to him

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when they first met, and that the critic allowed his personal resentment to bias his judgment, is ridiculous. The contrary is proved by the passage in *Ma Biographie* (*Nouveaux Lundis*, tome xiii.), where the author expressly recounts the circumstances.

Sainte-Beuve was impressed by Victor Hugo's genius and captivated by his personal charm; and, at the same time, he was fascinated by Madame Hugo. He became an intimate friend; saw the poet at least twice daily; praised, admired, wrote about the beautiful Adèle—and, indeed, became so enthusiastically friendly that the brilliant group which formed *Le Cénacle* (the Guest-Chamber), a club of kindred spirits in the several arts, must have thought that their latest recruit was qualifying to be the prophet of woman's supremacy in all things. As a matter of fact, the Hugo circle was not fettered by severe social conventionalities; yet even the self-confident Victor made objections when he found his numerous friends, from the polished Alfred de Vigny and the sentimental Lamartine to "Musset l'Ennuyé" and the brilliant light-hearted essayist, whom Monselet afterwards with so much justice called "the smiling critic" (*le critique*

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souriant), freely addressing his wife as Adèle. As for Sainte-Beuve, his complaint was so severe that, though he laughed at it afterwards as a flirtation with Romanticism, it might best be called *Adelaïsme*. This one-sided passion was no doubt the mainspring of the sufferings, thoughts, and poesies of the melancholy Joseph Delorme, the Gallic counterpart of the much more unendurable Werther. True, something of Sainte-Beuve's deeper melancholy of "seriousness" may have been due to his remote English strain, and his splenetic temperament to the fact that his mother passed several dolorous months between his birth and the death of her husband. It seems strange that so acute a critic of literary physiology should not have seen that his "spleen" was due more to want of outdoor life and to incessant mental preoccupation, and (in the "Joseph Delorme" period) to what I have called *Adelaïsme*, than to the circumstance of his mother having borne him during months of widowhood, or to that of his grandmother having been an Englishwoman. Although he was never married, Sainte-Beuve was of a susceptible nature. There is absolutely no warrant for the belief that he was so deeply in love with Adèle Hugo that his

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whole life was affected by the blight of unrequited affection. On the contrary, if he was the *critique souriant* in the world of literature, he was the *critique gai* in the affairs of life.

For a time everything prospered with *Le Cénacle*. Then one member and then another grew lukewarm or directly seceded. Sainte-Beuve slowly diverged from the views he had allowed himself to expound, overborne as he had been by the charm of Victor and the fascination of Madame Hugo. The already famous poet does not seem to have had any particularly high appreciation of his critical friend as a man of letters ; indeed, Sainte-Beuve was commonly regarded as nothing more than, at most, a conscientious and able critic, with genuine enough but mediocre original powers. In the first flush of intimacy, however, Hugo was as immoderate in his praise of his new acquaintance as was his wont in the matter of superlatives. But when the "eagle," the "royal meteor," ceased from the making of critical honey, when, in giving a present of a book, he no more inscribed above his signature on the flyleaf such pleasant phrases as, "To the greatest lyrical inventor French poetry has known since Ronsard," but, instead, uttered such words as "theatricality,"

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“violence,” “eccentricity”—then there was a cooling of enthusiasm.

But about this time, and indirectly owing to the Hugo connection, two important things happened. A journalistic and literary career was opened to Sainte-Beuve. He at once availed himself of the chance; so eager was he, indeed, that he left his surgeon's case at St. Louis's Hospital, where he had been a day-pupil, and it is said that he never went back for it. His vocation was in the art of literature, not in the science of medicine. As soon as he realised this, and saw his way to a possibility of living by the pen, he not only busied himself as a journalist, but prepared to undertake an ambitious literary task, a work of real magnitude. Probably if it had not been for Victor Hugo and Sainte-Beuve's ardent if transient romanticism, the admirable studies on *The French Poetry of the Sixteenth Century* would not have been written—not then, at any rate, nor in the form in which we know them. The critic had been impressed by the enthusiasm of Hugo and his circle for the early poets. He read, studied, and came to the conclusion that these were unworthily neglected. He discerned in them, moreover, the poetic

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ancestors of the enthusiastic members of *Le Cénacle* ; both were unconventional, individual, comparatively simple. The series of studies which, as the result, appeared in the *Globe* delighted the writer's friends and attracted no little share of literary attention ; but it was not till the publication of them collectively in book form that Sainte-Beuve's name became widely known as that of a scholarly and, above all, an independent critic. It was the prevalent literary vogue to decry the pre-classicists, or, at least, to affirm that there was little of abiding worth prior to Molière, Racine, and Corneille. By insight, critical acumen, felicitous quotation, and a light and graceful while incisive style (not, however, characterised by the limpid delicacy and suppleness of his best manner, as in the *Causeries du Lundi*), he won many admirers and did good service to literature, and particularly to literary criticism.

From this time forward Sainte-Beuve's career was a prosperous one, chequered now and again indeed, but in the main happy and marvellously fruitful. For some years he dreamed of poetic fame ; gradually he realised that his well-loved *Life, Poetry, and Thoughts of Joseph Delorme*, his *Consolations*,

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and his *August Thoughts* would never appeal to a public outside the literary world of Paris, and even there that they were assured of mere respect at most ; and finally he became convinced that it was neither as poet nor as novelist, but as critic, that he was to win the laurels of fame. To the last, however, he had a tender feeling for his poetic performances, and there was no surer way to his good graces than admiration of his poems. The most unsympathetic critic cannot regret Sainte-Beuve's having devoted so much time and so many hopes to those springtide blossoms of a summer that never came. At the least, they helped their author to a wide sympathy, to a deep insight, to that catholicity of taste which enabled him not only to enjoy for himself, but to interpret for others, the essential merits of a great number of poets,—writers so absolutely distinct as Virgil and Victor Hugo, Villon and William Cowper, Dante and Firdausi, Theocritus and Molière, Ronsard and Racine.

When Dr. Véron founded in 1829 the *Revue de Paris*, the predecessor of the more famous *Revue des Deux Mondes*, he made haste to enrol Sainte-Beuve among his contributors. He thought it possible that

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the poet might make a great name, but he was quite convinced that the critic would become a prince of his tribe. The result of his trust was more than satisfactory. Although Sainte-Beuve was only five- or six-and-twenty when he wrote his articles on Boileau, Racine, La Fontaine, Rousseau, André Chenier, and others, how admirable they are, and how well worth perusal even at the present date! In style, it is true, they are graceful and scholarly rather than winsome with individual charm, for the latter does not become a characteristic of his work till he has reached the noon of his maturity; but, even with this qualification, they are unquestionably delightful reading.

In the summer of 1830 Sainte-Beuve was in Normandy, at Honfleur, on a visit to his friend Ulric Guttinguer, when the July Revolution overthrew many institutions besides that of the old monarchy. With the advent of Louis Philippe arose schism among the brilliant staff of the *Globe*. Some maintained that the hour had come in which to cry "Halt" to further innovations; one or two wavered and talked of compromise; the more strenuous affirmed that there was as pressing need of progress as ever. Among

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the progressists was Sainte-Beuve, who had hurried back to Paris. The *Globe* became the organ of the Saint-Simonians ; and though Sainte-Beuve never identified himself with the school of Saint-Simon, he fought valiantly as a free-lance by the side of its exponents. But, before this change in the destiny of the paper (for, after the split, it abruptly lost its place in the van of Parisian journals, and was sold at a loss to a sanguine experimentalist, who in turn speedily disposed of it to the Saint-Simonians), a tragi-comedy, in which Sainte-Beuve and his former good friend M. Dubois were the chief actors, occurred. The clash of opinions at the editorial office begat heated discussions, reproaches, taunts even. Dubois reminded Sainte-Beuve, in not very complimentary terms, of how he had given him a lift into the literary world ; the critic made a scathing reply. The blood of all the Dubois boiled in the veins of the worthy editor, and he challenged Sainte-Beuve to mortal combat. So high did feeling run that the matter was really a serious one, though we may hesitate to accept the great critic's after-statement that he went to the duel with the full intention of killing his adversary. It was the Joseph

Delorme lying latent in Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve who made this affirmation. The preliminaries of the duel were arranged with all circumspection ; both antagonists made their wills and felt alternately heroic and despondent ; and at last the hour came. It was a chill and wretched morning, for the rain came down in a steady pour. What was the astonishment of M. Dubois and the seconds of both principals to see Sainte-Beuve take up his position with his pistol in his right hand and his unfolded umbrella upheld by his left. To the remonstrances of the seconds, he protested that he was willing to be shot, if need be—but to be drenched, no ! (*Je veux bien être tué ; mais mouillé, non.*) Four shots were exchanged, and editor and critic remained unhurt. Neither their ill-success nor the rain damped their bloodthirstiness, however, and if it had not been for the firm remonstrances of the seconds, who declared that the demands of honour had been amply satisfied, one or other of the combatants would have suffered for his folly. Happily, this was Sainte-Beuve's sole martial experience. As one of his detractors long afterwards maliciously remarked, thenceforth he confined himself to "stabbing with the pen,

and to destroying literary reputations by a *causerie*.

Sainte-Beuve's renewed connection with the *Globe* was not of long duration. His only interest in the doctrines of the Saint-Simonians was one of curiosity: neither more nor less than he, pre-eminently the hedonist of modern literature, felt in those of the enthusiasts who were bent upon reconciling democratic and radical politics with the most conservative Roman Catholicism. Although he knew and admired Lacordaire, Lamennais, and Montalembert, he refused to co-operate with them in the writing of articles for their journalistic organ, *L'Avenir*. These eminent men were not alone in their inability to understand Sainte-Beuve's mental temperament. They thought that because he seemed profoundly interested he was therefore a disciple. But the foremost critic of the day was a man of a passionate intellectual curiosity: his sovereign need was for new mental intellectual impressions. It was his insatiable curiosity into all manifestations of mental activity, as much as his exceptional receptivity, elasticity of sympathy, searching insight, and extraordinary synthetic faculty, that enabled him to become the master-critic. His catholicity of taste was his

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strength, as with others it is often a source of weakness. It was not through inability to find anchorage in the sea of truth that his was a restless barque, with sails trimmed for seafaring again as soon as a haven was entered ; it was because he was a literary viking, consumed with a passion for mental voyaging and remote explorations—because he loved the deep sea, and found that even the profoundest inlets, the grandest bays, were too shallow for him to rest content therein.

“ No one,” he says, “ ever went through more mental vicissitudes than I have done. I began my intellectual life as an uncompromising adherent of the most advanced form of eighteenth-century thought, as exemplified by Tracy, Daunou, Lamarck, and the physiologists : *là est mon fonds véritable*. Then I passed through the psychological and doctrinaire school as represented by my *confrères* on the *Globe*, but without giving it my unqualified adhesion. For a time thereafter I had my *liaison* with the school of Victor Hugo, and seemed to lose myself in poetical romanticism. Later, I fared by the margins of Saint-Simonism, and, soon thereafter, Liberal-Catholicism as represented by Lamennais and his group. In 1837, when residing at Lausanne, I glided past Calvinism and Methodism . . . but in all these wanderings I never (save for a moment in the Hugo period, and when under the influence of a charm) forfeited my will or my judgment, never pawned my

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belief. On the other hand, I understood so well both the world of books and that of men that I gave dubious encouragement to those ardent spirits who wished to convert me to their convictions, and indeed claimed me as one of themselves. But it was all curiosity on my part, a desire to see everything, to examine closely, to analyse, along with the keen pleasure I felt in discovering the relative truth of each new idea and each system, which allured me to my long series of experiments, to me nothing else than a prolonged course of moral physiology."

The short space at my command prevents my enlarging upon the hint conveyed in the last phrase, except to say that it is directly indicative to Sainte-Beuve's fundamental critical principle. To him criticism was literary physiology. With him a series of critiques meant a series of studies of—(1) a writer as one of a group, as the product of the shaping spirit of the time; (2) a writer as an individual, with all his inherited and acquired idiosyncrasies; (3) a writer as seen in his writings, viewed in the light of all ascertainable *personalia*; (4) the writings themselves, intrinsically and comparatively estimated. But, primarily, his essays were as much studies of character, of moral physiology, as of literary values.

After his withdrawal from the too sectarian

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Globe, Sainte-Beuve joined the staff of the *National*. With the ultra-Republican principles of that paper he had but a lukewarm sympathy, but his friend Armand Carrel, the editor, assured him that nothing would be expected from him save purely literary contributions. For about three years (1831-4) he remained on the staff of the *National*, and it was in the last year of the connection that he published his one novel, *Volupté*. The book had a gratifying reception so far as wide notice was concerned ; but it was generally adjudged to be unwholesome in tone and somewhat too self-conscious in style—though so beautiful a nature and so refined a critic as Eugénie de Guérin affirmed it to be a notable and even a noble book. That the prejudice against the author on account of it must have been strong is evident from the fact that when it was suggested to Guizot, then Minister of Public Instruction, that he should confer upon Sainte-Beuve a professional post at the Normal School, just vacant through the resignation of Ampère, he refused to appoint a man, howsoever brilliantly qualified, who had written such books as *Joseph Delorme* and *Volupté*. Guizot was conscientiously scrupulous in this matter ; and to show

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that he bore no personal ill-feeling, he appointed Sainte-Beuve to the secretaryship of an historical Commission, a post which the equally conscientious critic resigned in less than a year on the ground that it was becoming or had become a mere sinecure. Another instance of his conscientiousness is his having declined, about the same date, the Cross of the Legion of Honour—a distinction he would have been proud to accept had he felt assured that it was offered in recognition of his literary merits, but upon which he looked suspiciously because it came when the Ministry of M. Molé and M. Salvandy, both personal friends of his, was in power. Three years after the publication of his novel, he issued the last of his purely imaginative productions, the *Pensées d'Août*. In the same year (1837) he went to Switzerland, and having been invited by the Academy of Lausanne to deliver a course of lectures, he settled for a time in the pleasant Swiss town. There he delivered in all eighty-one lectures, the foundation of his famous and voluminous work on Port Royal. The history of the religious movement in the seventeenth century known as Jansenism, which occupied him intermittently for twenty years, is a

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monument of labour, research, and scrupulous historic fairness, and, though the least read, is one of his greatest achievements.

Both before and during his Swiss sojourn, and for about ten years thereafter, Sainte-Beuve was a regular contributor to the most famous magazine in Europe, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which had been founded in 1831, heir to the defunct *Revue de Paris*. The first number contains an article by him upon his friend George Farcy, a victim of the July Revolution; and thereafter appeared that long and delightful series of *Portraits Littéraires*, studies of contemporary as well as of deceased writers, which not only gave him a European reputation as a leading critic, but ultimately won him his election to the French Academy. This signal good-fortune happened in 1845, on the occasion of the death of Casimir Delavigne; and the irony of circumstances was obvious to many in the fact that the eulogium on the new "immortal" had to be pronounced by the reluctant Victor Hugo, his immediate predecessor. It was a memorable date, that 17th of February; and if among the many "immortals" who have been raised to glory by the

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Academy there are relatively few whose fame will be imperishable, there are not many with juster claims to remembrance, though in widely different degrees, than the two authors who were then elected to the coveted honour, Prosper Mérimée and Sainte-Beuve.

His periodical articles and his books (including five volumes of essays which he had contributed to the *Revue de Paris* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*) brought him in a very moderate income ; and it was not till 1840 that his means were materially improved. In that year he was appointed one of the keepers of the Mazarin Library. The appointment meant not only an increase of income, but a change of residence, for it comprised a suite of residential apartments at the Institute. This pleasant state of affairs came to an end after the Revolution in 1848. A ridiculous charge of corruption was brought up against him by envious and inimical journalists and political adversaries ; the ultra-Republicans accused him of having accepted bribes, hush-money, from the late Government. In vain Sainte-Beuve protested, and vainly he demanded a searching inquiry. The hint was taken up ; everywhere he was abused, condemned,

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scathingly ridiculed. Even when, at last, the truth was revealed and the greedy public learned that the amount of Sainte-Beuve's indebtedness was £4, and that that sum had been expended upon the alteration of a smoking chimney in his department of the Library, and the charge inadvertently entered in the official books simply under the heading "Ste. Beuve,"—even then there were many ungenerous souls who kept up the parrot cry of contumely. It somewhat unfortunately happened that about this time Sainte-Beuve left Paris, and of course there was at once a shout of triumph from his enemies. The real reasons for his departure were primarily financial, though no doubt he was not at all sorry to leave a city which had for the time being become so disagreeable to him—moreover, his distaste for the political issues then in full development was very strong. But after his resignation of his post at the Mazarin Library, which he had tendered in the heat of his indignation during the bribery controversy, he found that he would have to do something at once for a living. The political turmoil of 1848 was unfavourable for the pursuit of pure literature; and, despite his high reputation, the editors

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whom he knew could not promise him a sufficiency of remunerative work until times changed for the better. Accordingly, he very willingly accepted the Professorship of French Literature at the University of Liège, offered to him by M. Rogier, the Belgian Minister of the Interior. Liège he found monotonous and provincial, but he stayed there for some time, and attracted more than local, more even than national attention by his preliminary course of lectures on the chronological history of French literature. There, also, he delivered the famous series on Chateaubriand and his contemporaries, which amply demonstrated his independence as a critic, though many of his judgments and reservations brought a veritable storm of reproaches and angry recriminations about his ears. For a long time he was called an ingrate, a hypocrite, a resentful critic inspired by pique; but ultimately it was acknowledged that he had written the ablest and justest *critique* of the celebrated egotist and *poseur*. The fundamental reason of the attacks upon Sainte-Beuve was on account of his so-called inconsistency. True, among his early *Literary Portraits* was a flattering essay on Chateaubriand, but he was then under the

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magic charm of Madame Recamier, at whose house, Abbaye-aux-Bois, he heard read aloud in solemn state numerous extracts from the famous writer's unpublished *Memoirs*. Moreover, Chateaubriand had inspired him with a temporary enthusiasm. When, with fuller knowledge of the man and his writings and with the *Correspondence* to boot, he found that he had been mistaken, he said so.

Chateaubriand and his Literary Group under the Empire is the work which marks the turning-point in Sainte-Beuve's genius. Thenceforth he was, in truth, the foremost critic of his time.

Late in 1849 Sainte-Beuve, much to the chagrin of his Belgian friends and admirers, left Liège and returned to Paris. He was still hesitating how best to employ his pen when he received a flattering, but to him somewhat startling, offer from his friend Dr. de Véron, editor of *Le Constitutionnel*. This was to the effect that he should write a literary article for that paper every week. The reason of his perturbation was that hitherto he had always composed in leisurely fashion, and for papers or magazines whose readers were cultivated people, much more interested in literature than in politics and

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local news. Fortunately, M. de Véron overruled his scruples, and so there began that delightful and now famous series of literary critiques which the writer himself entitled *Causeries du Lundi*. He called them "Monday Chats" because each appeared on a Monday. For five days every week he "sporting his oak," and occupied himself for twelve hours daily with the study of his subject and the writing of his article; on the sixth he finally revised it; Sunday was his sole holiday from his task. By next morning he was deep in the subject of the *Causerie* for the following week. It was the need to be concise and simple that did so much good to Sainte-Beuve's style. As two of his most eminent friends said of them, they were all the better inasmuch as he had not had time to spoil them. From the end of 1849 to almost exactly twenty years later he wrote weekly, in the *Constitutionnel* or the *Moniteur*, with a single considerable interval, one of those brilliant, scholarly, fascinating articles, —collectively, a mass of extraordinarily varied work now embodied in fifteen goodly volumes.

When the *coup d'état* occurred, Sainte-Beuve gave his approval to the Empire.

Thereby he won for himself no little unpopularity. His first materially disagreeable experience of this was when he proceeded to lecture at the Collège de France, to the Professorship of Latin Poetry at which he had been appointed. The students would have none of him. He was an Imperialist, a Government payee, he wrote in the official organ, *Le Moniteur*. He was finally hissed from the lecture-room, whence he retired in high dudgeon. Ultimately the lecture he had tried to deliver, and those which were to have followed, were published in a volume entitled *A Study on Virgil*. The single intermission to his regular literary work already alluded to was during the four years when he held the post of Maître des Conférences at the École Normale, at a salary of about £240. When he again took up literary journalism, after his resignation of his professional post, it was once more as a contributor to the *Constitutionnel*. He now made a fair income, for his weekly contributions to that journal brought him in, by special arrangement, an annual salary of £624. The *Causeries* were now called *Nouveaux Lundis*, "New Monday-Chats." In the main this series (begun in 1861) is equal to the *Causeries du Lundi*, though there

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are signs ever and again of lassitude. This might well be. The work was a steady and serious strain, and the great critic's health gradually became undermined. In 1865, when he was in his sixty-first year, he wrote : " I am of the age at which died Horace, Montaigne, and Bayle, my masters : so I am content to die." It was in this very year that good fortune came to him, and greatly relieved the mental strain under which his strength was waning. He was appointed to a Senatorship of the Second Empire, a position which secured him an annual income of £1200. His Senatorial career was a dignified though not a brilliant one. He was ever on the side of true freedom, and was so independent in his attitude that he gave offence to those of his fellow-Senators who were Imperialists and resented his championship of religious liberty. This muzzled wrath broke into clamorous fury at an incident concerning which an absurd fuss has been made. Sainte-Beuve had arranged to give a dinner to some of his friends on the occasion of Prince Napoleon's departure from Paris, and, to suit that gentleman, had appointed Friday (which chanced to be Good Friday) as the night. The Prince, Edmond About, Gustave

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Flaubert, Renan, Robin, and Taine duly joined their host and spent a pleasant evening. But the jackals were on the trail. A howl arose about a conspiracy to undermine the religious welfare of the nation; the diners were arraigned as impious debauchees; and Sainte-Beuve in particular was upbraided for his "scandalous orgy."

One other and much more serious annoyance troubled the latter years of Sainte-Beuve. This arose from his writing for *Le Temps* (whither he had transferred his *Causeries*, on account of a servile attempt to muzzle him on the part of the temeritous directorate of the *Moniteur*); and, as *Le Temps* was hostile to the Government, M. Rouher and his *confrères* in the Ministry (as well as the whole Senate) thought it shameful that the critic should write for that journal, and did all in their power to force him into conformity with their views. But the critic was firmly independent, and emerged triumphantly from the ordeal.

For some years Sainte-Beuve had been in indifferent health. At last he became ill indeed, so that he could only stand or lie when he had writing to do, as to sit was impossible. By the late summer of 1869

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his case was desperate. Ultimately a perilous operation was made, but the patient sank under its effects. He died in his house in the Rue Mont Parnasse, on October 13, at the age of sixty-four. Along with the biographical fragment found on his desk on the morrow of his death, which concluded with the celebrated words, "Voué et adonné à mon métier de critique, j'ai tâché d'être de plus en plus un bon et, s'il se peut, habile ouvrier"—"Devoted with all my heart to my profession as critic, I have done my utmost to be more and more a good and, if possible, an able workman"—along with *Ma Biographie* were found written instructions as to his funeral. He directed that he should be buried in the Cemetery of Mont Parnasse beside his mother; that the ceremony should be as simple as practicable, and without religious rites or even a friendly oration. All due respect was paid to his wishes, and yet seldom has a funeral been attended with greater honour. It was not the Senator of the Second Empire who was carried to the grave, but the greatest of French critics, a writer of European renown. In the immense crowd which formed the voluntary procession—estimated at ten thousand—all

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political differences were forgotten : uncompromising Imperialists and equally uncompromising Republicans walked in union for once, in company with nearly all who were distinguished in letters, science, or art. The only words uttered above his grave were more eloquent in their poignant simplicity than the most glowing exordium: "Farewell, Sainte-Beuve ; farewell, our friend."

II

Sainte-Beuve's literary career may be studied in three main phases. The novelist least claims our attention ; the poet demands it ; while as a critic he appears as of supreme importance.

Volupté, to some extent, but still more the *Vie, Poésies, et Pensées de Joseph Delorme*, may be taken as embodying some of the positive and many of the spiritual experiences of Sainte-Beuve's life. We have his own testimony to the fact that *Joseph Delorme* was "a pretty faithful representation of himself morally, but not in the biographical details." This alone would give a permanent interest to the book, as it is admittedly in some degree the autopsychical record of the most complex,

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brilliant, protean spirit of our time. No one indeed has yet limned Sainte-Beuve for us as he, for instance, has revealed the heart, mind, and soul of Pascal. Neither D'Haussonville, his biographer, nor any of his critics, French and English, has done more than introduce us to the author of so many inimitable *Causeries*; none of them has made us intimate with Sainte-Beuve himself, notwithstanding the array of authentic facts and suggestive hints which can now be marshalled. He is easiest to be discerned in his writings: not in this essay nor in that series of essays, not in the grave pages of *Port Royal* nor in the alluring byways of the *Lundis*, neither in the sensitive poet of *The Consolations* nor in the austere pages of *Pensées d'Août*, not in that Gallic Werther, Amaury, the hero of *Volupté*, not even in Joseph Delorme; but in all collectively. One is always being surprised in him. There is one man in Amaury, another in Joseph Delorme, a very different one in *Pensées d'Août*, a still more distinct one in the *Nouveaux Lundis*, and in his single short tale, the charming *Christel*, there are hints of a personality whose shadowy features rarely, if ever, haunt the corridors of the *Causeries*.

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As a matter of fact, Sainte-Beuve became more and more reserved as he found himself deceived by the glowing perspectives of youth. Often he was consumed with a nostalgia for a country whence he was half voluntarily, half perforce an exile, the country of the Poetic Land where once he spent "six fleeting celestial months," * as a native of which he would fain be regarded even in the remote days when he found himself an alien among those whom he yearned to claim as brothers. Thenceforth the man shrank more and more behind the writer. The real Sainte-Beuve was no doubt less of a recluse in the days when he was a member of *Le Cénacle*, when he was one of the sprightliest in the Hugo circle, and laughed with de Vigny and sighed with Lamartine, debated with Hugo and flirted with Adèle. But even then his nature could not have been transparent to all, otherwise Alfred de Musset would not have drawn his picture of him as sitting somewhat apart in the shadow, rhyming a sonnet to a demoiselle's cap or a lyric to his mistress's eyebrow. Truly, as he himself says, in the preface to his *Poésies Complètes*, almost all of us have within ourselves a

* *Causeries du Lundi*, tome xvi.

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second self (" nous avons presque tous en nous un homme double ").

The *Vie, Poésies, et Pensées de Joseph Delorme* has been put forward as an effort on the part of Sainte-Beuve to introduce into France a poetic literature as simple, fresh, and spontaneous as that of the naturalistic poets of England, and of Cowper and Wordsworth in particular. Readers of that notable book will find it difficult to perceive any direct Wordsworthian influence, though the author makes clear his great admiration for the English poet and his school. Joseph Delorme, in fact, is cousin-german to Don Juan, closely akin to Chateaubriand's René, French half-brother to Goethe's Werther. He is the most literary of the family, but while he is as sentimental as René and as melancholy as Werther, he has not the frank *débonnaire* licentiousness of Don Juan. He is morbid in his thoughts and in his desires. The fellowship of a Tom Jones would have done him good; the laughing Juan, even, would have acted as a tonic. "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom," says Blake; but the poet-visionary did not mean the kind of excess in which the too introspective Joseph indulged. He said one good thing,

however, for which he will be remembered —when he spoke of his dread of marriage because of its restrictions upon his “rather rude philanthropy” (a euphemism for “free morals”), and defined it as *une égoïsme à deux personnes*.

Rousseau and Goethe were the literary godfathers of Joseph Delorme, who was born when the author of his being was only five-and-twenty. The nature of the book is indicated by a passage from Senancour's *Obermann*, which exactly strikes the keynote: “I have seen him, I have pitied him; I respected him; he was unhappy and virtuous. He had no transcendent misfortunes; but, on entering life, he found himself in a mesh of distastes and satieties [“il s'est trouvé sur une longue trace de dégoûts et d'ennuis”]; there he is still, there he has dwelt, there he has grown old ere age has come upon him, there he has literally buried himself.” The Adolphe of *Obermann*, indeed, is but a more melancholy and a more austere “double” of Joseph.

The following lines are fairly representative of the dominant sentiment of the book:

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VŒU

* * * * *
*Tout le jour du loisir ; rêver avec des larmes ;
Vers midi, me coucher à l'ombre des grands
charmes ;*

*Voir la vigne courir sur mon toit ardoisé,
Et mon vallon riant sous le coteau boisé ;*

*Chaque soir m'endormir en ma douce folie,
Comme l'heureux ruisseau qui dans mon pré
s'oublie ;*

*Ne rien vouloir de plus, ne pas me souvenir,
Vivre à me sentir vivre ! . . . Et la mort peut
venir.*

But a healthier note is often struck, as in the blithe strain wedded to a pathetic thought, "Ce ciel restera bleu Quand nous ne serons plus" ; often, too, one fresh and haunting, as in

*Et dans ses blonds cheveux, ses blanches mains
errantes—*

*Tels deux cygnes nageant dans les eaux trans-
parentes. . . .*

The *Life, Poetry, and Thoughts* are worth reading ; the book contains much that is interesting, no little that is suggestive, not infrequently thoughts, lines, and passages of genuine beauty. But it can enthrall only those who are enjoying the exquisite sentimentalism of adolescence ; ere long it will

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interest only the student of a certain literary epoch, the epoch begun by Rousseau, that found its acme in Byron, that knew its autumn in Werther, that had its grave in the René of Chateaubriand, its brief phantasmal second life in Joseph Delorme. The poetry, in it is often sterile, and is frequently forced, self-conscious, obtrusively sedate in imagery, occasionally even is markedly derivative. We find Sainte-Beuve the poet much better worth listening to in *Les Consolations*. In point of style there is not very much difference, though a greater dexterity is manifest, a more delicate metrical tact, perhaps also a more unmistakably natural note. But there is no more kinship between the author of *Les Consolations* and Joseph Delorme than between Don Juan and Manfred. The volume was the product of the religious mysticism which underlay Sainte-Beuve's mental robustness—a trait which allured him often by dangerous pitfalls, but also enabled him to understand so well the great religious writers of whom he still remains the most sympathetic as well as the most brilliant exponent. It seemed ultra-saintly to some of those who read it on its appearance. Béranger annoyed the author by some sly

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disparagement ; Prosper Mérimée cynically smiled at what he took to be a literary ruse ; Gustave Planché and others gleefully whetted their vivisectionary knives. Yet it was for the most part well received by the critics, and no cruel witticism like that of Guizot on its predecessor (that Joseph Delorme was "a Werther turned Jacobin and sawbones") went echoing through Paris. The public remained indifferent, but the poet was gratified when Chateaubriand wrote him a letter of praise with a characteristic "Écoutez votre génie, Monsieur" ; when Hugo and Alfred de Vigny waxed enthusiastic ; when Béranger sent an epistle of kindly criticism ; and when Lamartine unbosomed himself as follows : "Yesterday, I re-read the *Consolations* . . . they are ravishing. I say it and I repeat it : it is this that I care for in French poetry of this order. What truth, what soul, what grace and poetry ! I have wept, I who never weep." (This must have amused Sainte-Beuve, later, if not then. The sentimental Lamartine was always weeping over one thing or another, and the "J'en ai pleuré, moi qui oncques ne pleure," is as little apt as though Mr. Pickwick were to say, "I have smiled, who never

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smile.") It was at this time, the period wherein *The Consolations* were produced, that Sainte-Beuve dreamed upon Latmos and believed that the goddess whom he loved was going to reward his passion. The "celestial months" passed, but they were ever an oasis to which he delighted to return in memory. He even wished, in later years, that those who desired to know him should seek and find him a happy Dryad flitting through the shadowy vales and sunlit glades of the woodlands of song. No doubt the real Sainte-Beuve is as much in this book of verse as in any other of his library of volumes, but it is the Sainte-Beuve of a certain period, and even then only one of two selves. *The Consolations* always remained his favourite volume. It contains a great deal of gracious and even beautiful verse, in style often clear as a trout-stream, fresh and fragrant as a May-meadow, though even here, as certainly with his other "poésies," one is inclined to say of him, in the words of his own Joseph Delorme, that he had not sufficiently "the ingenuousness of deep faith, the instinctive and spontaneous cry of passionate emotion." Some of the *Consolations* are extremely Wordsworthian—how closely,

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indeed, he could enter into the spirit of the great English poet is evident in the following free translation of that most lovely sonnet beginning, "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free."

*C'est un beau soir, un soir paisible et solennel ;
A la fin du saint jour, la Nature en prière
Se tait, comme Marie à genoux sur la pierre,
Qui tremblante et muette écoutait Gabriel :*

*La mer dort ; le soleil descend en paix du ciel ;
Mais dans ce grand silence, au-dessus et derrière,
On entend l'hymne heureux du triple sanctuaire,
Et l'orgue immense où gronde un tonnerre éternel.*

*O blond jeune fille, à la tête baissée,
Qui marches près de moi, si ta sainte pensée,
Semble moins qui la mienne adorer ce moment,
C'est qu'au sein d'Abraham vivant toute l'année,
Ton âme est de prière, à chaque heure, baignée ;
C'est que ton cœur recite un divin firmament.*

This, of course, is but indifferent verse after the superb original, but it shows both how Sainte-Beuve was inspired by Wordsworth, and how ably he too could write, albeit as a translator, in simple and unaffected strains. Although the second, third, and fourth lines bear no resemblance to the original and the rest is only in a lesser degree unliteral, it must be borne in mind that the full beauty of the original is untranslatable, and that the French poet strove to

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convey to the French reader the same impression as an English reader would gain from the English sonnet. However, the importance of this and other experiments is not to be overlooked. Many of the younger poets owe much, directly or indirectly, to the lesson taught by Sainte-Beuve in what a hostile critic has called his "Anglo-French metrical essays."

Yet, while it is true that the man is perhaps to be seen most clearly in his poetry,— "it is in following the poet that we find the man," as Anatole France says,— even here he is an evasive, an uncertain personality. The strange mixture of a sensuousness that is at times almost sensual, a mysticism which would suit a religious enthusiast, a clarity of thought and an exquisite sense of the beauty of precision and artistic form, a frequent remoteness of shaping emotion, coupled with keen perception of the sovereign value of that resistless formative power which makes the creatures of the imagination more real than the actual beings about us *—all this, and

* In his own words, he sought to arrive "at that particularity and at that precision which causes the creations of our mind to become altogether ours and to be recognised as ours."

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his complex style (which now is simple, now is heated with fires unlit of the sun, and again is involved, obscure almost, wrought to an excessive finish, *tourmenté*), makes Sainte-Beuve the poet a profoundly puzzling as well as interesting study. In his last volume of verse, particularly, he is, as one of his critics has said, "tourmenté à l'excès, souvent d'une étrangeté qui déconcerte." But it is quite wrong to assert, as has been affirmed more than once, that Sainte-Beuve's poetic melancholy, the undertone of each of his three books, is assumed. One writer in *Le Temps* (or *Le Figaro*) recently found a proof of this literary insincerity in some remarks made by the critic in his old age, remarks treating his former mysticism lightly, with an avowal that "his odours of the sacristy were really meant for the ladies." "I have been guilty of a little Christian mythology in my time," he admitted, "but it all evaporated long ago. It was for me, as the swan to Leda's wooer, merely a means to reach fair readers and to win their tender regard." But this, quite obviously, is mere badinage. If there be any truth in it at all, it is one of those remote filaments of fact which go to the weaving of the web of truth ;

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nothing more. His melancholy was a genuine sentiment, which found expression differently at divers times. Even in his latest essays, where his natural geniality is allowed free play, it is traceable in those occasional bitternesses and abrupt dislikes, those half-weary and yet mordant "asides," which show that the man was by no means wholly absorbed in the critic. He himself, as we have seen, attributed this fundamental strain of sadness in his nature to his mother's early widowhood. But, as M. France has well said, it was another mother, the Revolution, that inoculated him with the malady of the age—a malady to which M. Taine, the most brilliant of the disciples of Sainte-Beuve, has alluded so eloquently: "It was then that the malady of the age appeared, the spiritual inquietude typified by Werther and Faust, almost identical with that which, in a somewhat similar time, agitated men at the beginning of the century. I would call it the discontent with present horizons, the vague desire after a higher beauty and an ideal happiness, a pathetically sad aspiration towards the infinite. Man suffers in doubting and yet he doubts: he tries to recapture his lost beliefs, they are really in his hand." (*Hist. de la Lit. Anglaise*,

tome iii.) This melancholy nature, induced by the spirit of the age, derived now from this source and now from that, and occasionally insincere, is most marked in its least genuine aspects in the *Pensées d'Août*. There is nothing in it so fine, in the poetry of melancholy, as the lines in *The Consolations* (inscribed to Mme. V. H. ; no other, of course, than the immaculate Adèle Hugo) beginning :

Plus fraîche que la vigne au bord d'un antre frais.

The chief poem in the collection, entitled *Monsieur Jean*, is an ill-considered attempt at a didactic novelette in verse. The author did not so regard it ; he believed that he had wooed and won *Musa Pedestris*, and had given his poetry the tone of serene wisdom. Jean is a natural son of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and is a simple, gentle creature, eager to expiate in his remote village, by piety and endless good deeds, what he cannot but regard as the disastrous glory of his father. But the poet's failure is a signal instance of the folly of metrical didactics. *Jean* bored the reading public, who combined in awarding the *Pensées d'Août* what its author called a really savage reception. In this book, more than anywhere else

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in his poetical writings, is true what Matthew Arnold said of him, that he lacked something of flame, of breath, of pinion : here, more than elsewhere, his poems *côtoient la prose*—coasted perilously near the land of prose. As a matter of fact, the book was a complete failure ; it caused the pendulum of his poetic repute to swing back, and to be caught up and never let go again. Moreover, its reception stifled the poet in Sainte-Beuve. It is a poignant personal note that underlies his famous remark, "Every one contains a dead poet in his soul."

But, after all, even the most reluctant reader of Sainte-Beuve as a poet cannot, if he be minded to criticism, afford to overlook this important section of the life-work of the great critic. It is necessary, indeed, not only to an understanding of the man, but of the writer. For in these *Poésies Complètes*, to quote the words of a sympathetic critic, "is revealed the most inquiring, the most sagacious, the most complex spirit " to whom the age has given birth.

It is not feasible here, in the limited space at my command, to attempt any analysis of *Volupté*, Sainte-Beuve's sole effort in fiction save the short tale *Christel*. Some day when a critical historian, curious

as to the mainsprings of, let us hope, the long since cured *maladie du siècle*, will occupy himself with the fortunes of Werther and René, Adolphe and Amiel, he will not omit to include in that strange company the amorously sentimental and sentimentally melancholic Amaury. For myself I admit I find that youth quite as entertaining as either of the more famous offspring of Goethe or Chateaubriand.

As a historian Sainte-Beuve showed remarkable aptitude, but it is as an historian of mental phases, episodes and general events, rather than of the ebb and flow of outer weal, the conflict of kingdoms and the fortunes of internecine warfare, the rise of this house or that dynasty, the ruin of cities and the growth of States. He could have been neither a Gibbon nor a Niebuhr, neither a Guizot nor a Mommsen, not even a Macaulay or an Ampère; but he is in the domain of historical literature what the author of the *History of the Rise of Morals in Europe* and the *History of Rationalism* is in the sphere of ethical research, though, of course, there is a radical distinction between the method of Mr. Lecky and that of the author of *Port Royal*. To the accomplishment of this immense undertaking

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Sainte-Beuve brought his inexhaustible patience, his almost unerring faculty of wise discrimination, his precise and scientific method of analysis and exposition, and a style which gave wings to words yoked to dry and apparently outworn subjects. It may safely be said that no student of Pascal or of the religious movement in the seventeenth century will ever be able to dispense with Sainte-Beuve's masterly work.

As the literary critic, as the first who brought into the analysis and exposition of literature the methods of exact science, Sainte-Beuve must always have a high place in the literary history of the nineteenth century. Ultimately, it may be that his chief glory will lie in his having been the pioneer of a new literary art, in his having been the torch-bearer who gave light and direction to many, not heeding much whether his torch, its service done, should thereafter be seldom seen and rarely sought. His example has been of almost inestimable value, and not among his countrymen only. All of the foremost living critics of France, from the eldest and most brilliant, Henri Taine, to Paul Bourget, the late Émile Hennequin, Ernest Tissot, and Charles Morice, have learned much from him—some

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a lifelong lesson, others guiding hints only.

In the *Notes et Rémarques* at the end of the sixteenth volume of the *Causeries du Lundi* occurs the following: "I have given no one the right to say—He belongs to us [*Il est des nôtres*]." It is this absolute independence, this many-sidedness of Sainte-Beuve, which is one of the secrets of his success. He can be an intellectual comrade of every poet, from the austere Dante to the gay Villon; of every wit and satirist, from Rabelais to Rivarol; of every builder up of ethical systems and every iconoclast of creeds, of the ancient Latins and Greeks as well as of the modern Germans and English; and, moreover, at all times a comrade with an eye to the exact value of and pleasure derivable from his companion of the hour. Here, it seems to me, is his strength and his weakness. He can be *bon camarade* with every one, but he is never able to forget that he is the observer of the thoughts, speech, action, and principles of those with whom he fares. He has charming ruses for evading detection. He will laugh gaily, he will smile, he will allude to this or that scarcely pertinent matter, he will altogether diverge from his

subject, he will reintroduce it casually and possibly dismiss it lightly, yet he will have had but one aim in view from the outset : to analyse and estimate the writings of his author ; to discover the shaping circumstances of the latter as an individual ; to strip him of what is extraneous and reveal him as he really is ; in a word—to portray him in one composite photograph and give us a likeness of the man as well as of the author which shall be none the less true because it resolves into definite features the fleeting and indeterminate traits which we perceive, now in the one, now in the other. He is no believer in the doctrine of the isolation of an author from his writings ; it seems as absurd to him as it would be to assert that no notice of the prism may be taken in a study of the chemic action of light passing therethrough. But, on the other hand, the question arises if Sainte-Beuve is not apt to be misled by his own theory, having to make positive affirmations based on facts necessarily in some degree supposititious. Herein is the hidden reef of literary psychology, and even so great a critic as Taine is occasionally missuaded by semblances which he takes for actualities. The elder writer is content to be a careful

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scientific observer and delights in artistic demonstration of his newly perceived and otherwise accumulated facts: Taine, Paul Bourget, and the later literary analysts go further, and wish to reach down through facts to their origins and to the primary impulsion again of the influences which moulded those origins—and, finally, by cumulative verification to transform hypothesis into demonstrable truth. But, fundamentally, both means are identical; the basis of each is the adoption, for literary research, of the method of exact science. Sainte-Beuve hated fixed judgments; he had none of the arrogances of his critical kindred. He neither said himself, nor cared to hear others saying, that a book was definitely good or definitely bad; he loved the *nuances*, the delicacies and subtleties of criticism, as much as he disliked rigid formulas. Yet his studies in literary psychology, as Paul Bourget would call them, are not only acute, but are generally profoundly conclusive. It is his suave and winsome manner that makes many think he is too complaisant to be critical, though he has himself said that in his *Portraits* the praise is conspicuous and the criticism inobtrusive —“ dans mes *Portraits*, le plus souvent la

louange est extérieure, et la critique intestine." The *man* himself continually evades us, but the *critic* is always trustworthy. He has, to a phenomenal degree, the delicate *flair* which detects the remotest perfume amid a confusion of fragrances ; he knows how to isolate it, how to detach it, how to delight us with it—and then, when we are just upon the verge of deeper enjoyment, he proves that the scent is not so exquisite in itself after all, but owes much to the blending of the exhalations of neighbouring flowers and blossoms and herbs. While we are still wavering between conviction and disenchantment, he explains that it has this peculiarity or that because of the soil whence it derives its nurture, a thin rocky earth or loam of the valley. Then, finally, lest we should turn aside disappointedly, he tells us something about it which we had but half noticed, praises fragrance and bloom again, and with a charming smile gives us the flower to take with us, perchance to press and put away, like sweet-lavender or wild-thyme, a hostage against oblivion of a certain hour, a certain moment of fresh experience.

What range for one man to cover ! Let one but glance at the contents of all these

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volumes. Besides this novel, these three collections of poems, here are seven volumes of *Port Royal* (containing a multitude of vignettes and sketches as well as carefully drawn pictures and portraits), fifteen volumes of the *Causeries du Lundi*, volumes upon volumes of *Nouveaux Lundis*, *Portraits Littéraires*, *Portraits des Contemporains*, *Derniers Portraits*, and *Portraits des Femmes*, a *Tableau Historique et Critique de la Poésie Française et du Théâtre Français au xvi^e Siècle*, and miscellaneous essays and studies. Then the richly suggestive *Notes*, and *Thoughts*, and *Remarks* must be added, and the recent volume edited by M. Jules Troubat, Sainte-Beuve's latest secretary and "good friend with qualifications," and an *Introduction* here and an *Étude* there.

I should like to conclude with a selection from the several hundred detached *Pensées* of Sainte-Beuve, which are often so beautiful, so clever, or so witty, and are always so suggestive; but that is impracticable now. Those who would become more intimate with the man as well as with the writer should turn, in particular, to the two hundred and more *Notes et Pensées* in the eleventh volume of the *Causeries du Lundi*, and to the richly suggestive posthumous

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collection, *Les Cahiers de Sainte-Beuve*. For "finis," however, I may select one, peculiarly apt to the great critic himself, as well as to the epoch. It is cxxvii. of the *Notes et Pensées*: "Great things may be accomplished in our days, great discoveries for example, great enterprises ; but these do not give greatness to our epoch. Greatness is shown especially in its point of departure, in its flexibility, in its thought."

1890

THE MODERN TROUBADOURS

(1900)

IF there is one region of Europe of which it can be said that it has been continually the home of poetry, that region is "the sunny corner of France," as Paul Arène calls Provence, "the Empire of the Sun," as Mistral alludes to his native land, "the Midi," as the old Roman province is universally designated. Every literature in Europe has drawn light and warmth from this source ; and to-day Provençal literature is still the only national literature whose salient characteristics are youth, hope, and joy. In one of the admirable letters of La Comtesse Sophie de L—— (the "Mignon" of Aubanel's charming posthumous volume of correspondence) occurs the phrase, "La Provence, entre toutes les nations, est restée jeune" ; and to the student of Provençal history, of Provençal life and literature, the phrase carries conviction. In the days of the Troubadours, Provence was not only

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the one country where poetry was nourished as a beautiful art, where it was the actual breath of the finer spirits of the time ; it was also the one inheritor of the gladness that had been the gladness of Greece, the gladness that died out of Europe with Julian the Apostate, and only once or twice during many generations revealed itself as a living force, now in the Italy of the Renaissance, now in the England of Shakespeare and Raleigh. To-day, in the work of every Provençal poet of note—as Mistral says of a book by one of his friends, the Aixois poet, Baptiste Gaut—“un petit vent de Grèce agite son habit.” The song of the delight of life was the song of every *trouvère* from the banks of the rushing Arc, the brown Durance, or the azure Rhône, to the Loire, the willowed Marne, and the sea-wandering Seine. To-day the rural poets by the Loire are silent, and those of an urban Seine sing of despair and sorrow, of loss and regret and longing ; pessimistic and disillusioned, they have renamed love, desire ; hate, bitterness ; beauty, illusion ; nobility, vanity ; gladness, regret ; hope, despair. But in the South, in that Midi so passionately loved and so passionately sung, life is more than

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ever life, love more than ever love, beauty and joy and gladness more than ever gladness and joy and beauty. It is almost impossible not to find this note of joy in the writings of every Provençal poet—and now, Provençals and Languedociens, from Toulouse to Antibes, from Briançon to Barcelona, and above all in Provence proper, the singers are legion. Even with the saddest—and there is no Provençal poet whose song is all of sadness—there is a joy of life which is as an inextinguishable fount.

Perhaps the most sombre, as well as certainly one of the most powerful and intense, of the Provençal poets is the Protestant Languedocien, Auguste Fourès; but no reader of *Cants del Soulelh*, *La Muso Sylvestro*, *Lou Troumbeto*, to mention his three most characteristic works, can fail to note therein the deep delight in life, as well as the ardent heart and impassioned mind of a poet the secret of whose genius was a continual grave ecstasy. Perhaps the most "divinely melancholic" is Alphonse Tavan, yet the melancholy and sadness of some of the poems in his winsome *Amour e Plour* (*Love and Tears*) must seem to the Northern reader but April weather, brief sallies of rainbow-lit rain, soft showers

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among lilacs at dawn or sundown. There is, in the Provençal literature of to-day, nothing of the poignant bitterness of Heine or of the weariness of De Musset, nothing in the vaguest degree resembling either the evil beauty of the *Fleurs du Mal* or the morose despair of *The City of Dreadful Night*, nothing of the lamentation of the Irish or Scottish Gael over "that which has gone away upon the wind." Everywhere is the note of rejoicing in life. Even in the work of the delicate and ill-fated Jules Boissière, whose recent tragic end in the French Orient closed a career of rare promise, we find this trait as marked as in the lyric serenity of Mistral or the joyous abandon and sunny paganism of Aubanel. In his beautiful ode *Of the Sky, of the Waters, of the Earth* (*Dou Cèu, de l'Aigo e de la Terro*), in *Li Gabian*, he cries: "Adieu l'enuei e l'escor!" ("Farewell, weariness and distaste!") Everywhere

*L'amour vanego à l'asard
Per gravo, colo, e carriero ;
Dins li poutoun dóu vènt Larg,
Te beve coume un neitar,
Festo dóu Cèu, de la Mar,
De la Terro entiero.**

* "Love wanders at hazard through the streets, by the hillsides, in the valleys. In the kisses of

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For every other Provençal poet, as for him, is the aptness of the motto, "Noste Sant Grasall, lou Bèu," "Our Sanct-Graal, the Beautiful." There is not a singer among them who has not two mistresses, two Lauras of inspiration—the Joy of Life, and Provence. "O ma Prouvenço," cries one, but it is the voice of all, "O ma Prouvenço ardènto e siavo"—though perhaps few likewise seriously claim that Provençal is "the language of the kings of old, of the peasants, and of God."

If one wish to understand Provence, or to approach its contemporary literature, with adequate knowledge of that wonderful Provence of old which for generations enthralled and inspired Europe with its romance, its poetry, its codes of love and chivalry, with all its lovely and dignified traditions, one's best preparation, by a strange contrast, is through the extensive and erudite labour of an American enthusiast. In his two beautiful volumes, *The Troubadours at Home*, Mr. Justin H. Smith has demonstrated his vast subject-matter with a fullness, a thoroughness, and a

the wave-born wind I drink to thee as a nectar,
Festival of the Sky, the Sea, and the whole
Earth."

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vivifying sympathy which render his labour of love a truly valuable production.

It is with some self-denial that one refrains from a period—a period of two hundred years, from its dawn with Duke Guihem of Aquitaine, Marcabru, and the famous Rudel, to its sunset with Guiraut Riquier at the close of the thirteenth century—so fascinating in every way, but above all to the student of the origins of modern literatures. Again, and particularly in connection with the hidden growth and immediate origins of modern Provençal literature, one would gladly dwell on the fascinating and complex problem of the making of Provençal in all its many dialects, and on the still more complex ethnological problem of the fundamental constituents of the Provençal nature, mind, and genius. As Mistral says in the preface to his great philological work, *Lou Tresor dou Felibrige*, “Quau tén la lengo tén la clau,” “Who holds the language holds the key.” But that is apart from the subject-matter of the present article, and indeed would not be alluded to but for the obvious, if not direct or unbroken, connection between the Provence of old and the Provence of to-day.

Gaston Paris and other scholars have

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written much on the ethnological foundations of the Provençal peoples; there is a whole library of books on *Langue d'Oc* and *Langue d'Oil*; and there is no lack of learned treatises, scholarly dissertations, and more or less valuable and voluminous studies, summaries, and inquiries on everything to do with Provence (the wider Provence of old as well as the Provence of to-day). Perhaps much learning can be conveyed in a few words. Gaston Paris himself has summed up the career of the old Provençal literature by saying that from its original seat in or near Limousin it spread over Poitou and Languedoc, aroused in France an imitative poetry, and inspired the Minnesingers of Germany, created the poetry of Spain and Portugal, and in Italy fertilised the soil that was to produce a Dante and a Petrarch. Through Dante and Petrarch, all modern lyric poetry may reasonably be said to descend from the Troubadours of Provence. A scrupulous and scholarly English critic has demonstrated that our own literature was almost constantly under Italian (and, therefore, directly or indirectly, Provençal) influence for three hundred years. M. Gaston Paris is explicit as to the Minnesingers, whom some Teutonic

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and British writers hold to have been wholly independent of Southern influences. "La poésie lyrique française," he says, "exerça à son tour de l'influence sur l'Allemagne, où elle fut (ainsi que son initiatrice méridionale) imitée de bonne heure par les Minnesingers."

All this wonderful efflorescence of poetic genius died away before English had become the uniform speech of a welded nation. Consideration of it might, therefore, seem superfluous to a study of the Provençal literature which with Jasmin lifted up its head anew and with Roumanille and Mistral became a living and beautiful creature—"a divine figure," as one of the *Felibres* has it, "with a Greek soul and a Latin spirit, with Celt and Visigoth as ancestors, with all the nations of the world as blood-relations, and with Paradise, renamed Provence, as her Promised Land." But it is not superfluous. In every direction of understanding and sympathy the student will find himself on surer ground, will more accurately understand and appreciate, in degree as he is well informed on the history of all that of old made Provence so famous in every land, the Provence that Keats has immortalised for us in a single line. With this know-

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ledge—and no more attainable and easier guide exists than the two scholarly and entertaining volumes by Mr. Justin Smith—he will discover a continuity that is not readily to be discerned otherwise. When, in our day, Teodor Aubanèu (Aubanel) sings his famous “Quau canto soun mau encanto”—“Who sings his own sorrow, enchants”—he is but saying, out of the same Provençal heart, in the same Provençal tongue (a tongue of many dialects, but a single language, as a trailing wild-rose has many blooms), and in the same Provençal land, what Duke Guihem the Crusader sang in 1100, “A song I’ll fashion from my grief”; and it might be either Gaucelm Faidit of Molemort, the twelfth-century Joglar, or Théodore Aubanel of Avignon, the nineteenth-century Catullus of Provence, who writes :

*L’amour es la vido,
La vido es l’amour :
L’amour nous convid
A cuiè la flour . . .*

for both have said the same thing in the same words of the same singing speech. Both—the Rudels and Marcabrus, the Arnauts de Marueilh and Bernarts de Ventadorn, the Gaucelms and Guihems of to-day, and the

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Jasmins and Roumanilles, the Mistral and Aubanel of that dim, remote golden age of song—to reverse the mere accident of nomenclature—have a common inspiration, a manner in common, a heart and soul alike. “La cigalo di piboulo, la bouscarlo di bouissoun, lou grihet di ferigoulo, tout canto sa cansoun”—“The tree-locust in the poplar, the thrush in the wayside bush, the grasshopper under the wild thyme, each sings its own song.”

As we know it, modern Provençal literature may be said to begin with Jasmin. He had precursors and contemporaries, but his, in remote Agen, near Toulouse, and so outside of latter-day Provence proper, was the first master-voice to arrest the *lengue roman* from disappearing in a hundred channels and sands of dialect, the first to lure the cultured ear of France and the world beyond. Jasmin was not a great genius like Frédéric Mistral, but in his hour and place he was, early and late, a great pioneer, the proudly isolated captain of what seemed a forlorn hope.

It is an error, frequently iterated, that Provençal literature absolutely lapsed during some four or five hundred years, and that the wonderful revival which happened well

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on in the nineteenth century knew no immediate precursors. In each century there occur at least one or two eminent names, as, for example, Grassois La Bellaudière in the sixteenth century, the Roumanille or Mistral of that age; and Pierre Goudelin, the Toulousian Aubanel of the seventeenth century. One name, indeed, from the latter century is as fresh to-day as two hundred years ago, and perhaps better known in Provence than any other singer of the past, the then-and-now beloved *noëlliste* Saboly, whose lovely Noël's, or Christmas carols, may still be heard throughout the Midi at mid-winter. There were others, in each generation, whom we need not mention here. They were, however, few and isolated and spoke no common Provençal speech, but used each his own regional dialect. Above all, none wrote from out of the people, as one of the people, for the people. Despourrins was a poetic Watteau, not a Burns; the Abbé Favre, the Herrick of the Midi, was the joyous Prior of Celleneuve who lilted for the Languedocien dames and gentry, and not for the unlettered and indifferent people of Languedoc. Even when Jasmin came upon the scene, early in the nineteenth century,

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there were Provençal singers of note, though none was for Provence, but for his own province only. The now celebrated modern Provençal anthology made by Roumanille and his colleagues had its immediate predecessor in 1823, when the brothers Achard of Marseilles and seven other *felibres* (they called themselves *troubaires* then) published a successful contemporary *Treasury*. The famous *Felibrige* itself was the outcome rather than the progenitor of the new life which became unified in the Provençal Renaissance. That league was inaugurated by Roumanille in 1852 at the "Congress of Provençal Troubadours" held at Arles; but before its formation there was a great outburst of patois minstrelsy, many books appeared in this or that dialect, and numerous periodicals in Provençal and French circulated from Marseilles, Avignon, and Aix. Roumanille himself, indeed, had already raised the Rhône-side patois to a language, for in 1847 and 1851 had appeared *Li Margarideto* and *Li Sounjarello*.

To-day Jasmin is not much read in France. He is beloved in seminaries and orphanages, and his books are among the "specially recommended volumes of eminent authors"; but even with the Languedociens of Agen

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and Toulouse his fame is a genial tradition rather than a vivid recognition. Yet every one is supposed to know all he has written, and to admire it, or at least the *Françouneto*. He is to the Midi what Longfellow is to America ; and just as Longfellow was overrated but is now unjustly underrated, so is it with Jasmin. At the same time it must be admitted that in lyric faculty, in human range, in universal interest there is no just comparison of the Provençal with the American poet. Jasmin is eminently provincial, in every sense of the word. Nor has his poetry that finish of art which alone (save perhaps in one or two national songs) enables verse to endure. His faculty of rhythmic utterance was as spontaneous and inevitable as with Béranger, Burns, or Heine ; but he lacks the real culture and intuitive knowledge of men and the thoughts of men in the outer world which with these poets was the soil whence many of their fairest flowers grew.

Although in later life Jasmin produced works of signal merit and beauty, notably *Maltro l'Innocènto* and *Mous Noubels Soubenis* (*Martha the Innocent* and *New Recollections*), his *chef-d'œuvre* was the ever-charming and delightful work of his maturity,

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Françouneto,* completed when he was forty-two, though for seven years the poet had occupied himself with its composition and revision. This lovely and graceful idyll of Provençal life is the flower of modern Gascon literature and one of the treasures of French poetry. Its significance as a Provençal masterpiece is in the fact that it preceded not only the now world-famous *Mirèio* of Mistral and the first works of Roumanille, but also the first definite organisation of "the Provençal Renaissance." Neither Roumanille nor Mistral, not even the love-lyrist of Provence *par excellence*, Théodore Aubanel, has given a more winsome Tanagra of Love, as one might say, than *Françouneto*—*Françouneto* "damb soun cap de luzèr e soun ped d'Espagnolo e sa taio de fissaïou," "with her lizard-head and her Spanish dancer's feet and her waist like a wasp's." She is the idol of the poet, and idolised by all.

It is not yet half a century since the Félibrige †—"association régionaliste d'écri-

* *Françouneto* herself is a reflection of *Mag-nounet*, *Jasmin*'s beautiful and charming young wife, and the lifelong inspirer of his muse.

† This Provençal equivalent for "League of Poets" carries an accent only when used as a French term in a French context.

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vains et d'artistes du Midi de la France"—was formally founded. In these forty-seven years the great wave, which on its ascent uplifted Roumanille and Mistral to its crest and on whose crest Mistral still rests supreme, has covered the Midi in one vast triumphant sweep. Provence has become a nation recreated by genius. The shadow lies in this, an already paralysing apprehension, that with the death of Mistral (when that veritable disaster for Provence comes at last) the great wave will be crestless, will be seen to have spent its force, to be swinging indolently or idly lapsing along these shores of old romance. Mistral himself, though he has given all his genius to the Provençal national movement and has nourished and sustained it for half a century with indomitable power, resource, and influence, is not blind to the bitter facts that the language is being more and more relinquished by the people as the unique and proud expression of themselves and their nation; that the league itself is now rather a forlorn hope than an eager vanguard or militant army; and that among all its able and sometimes truly notable lieutenants there is not one, now that the veteran Félix Gras has passed away, who has authority and power

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Aubouro-te, raço latino . . .

*Emè toun pèu que se desnouso
A l'auro santo dou Tabor,
Tu siès la raço lumenouso
Que vièu de joio e d'estrambord ;
Tu siès la raço apoustoulico
Que sono li campano à brand :
Tu siès la troumpo que publico
E siès la man que trais lou gran.*

*Aubouro-te, raço latino ! **

“ There,” exclaimed a member of the little company (one of the most notable of the younger writers of the Midi), “ there is our hope, our faith, and our flag. The Latin genius with the Provençal spirit—that is our literary ideal ; as the Latin genius with the French spirit is our political ideal—as, across the Alps, with our racial kin, it is the Latin genius with the Italian spirit, or, across the Pyrenees, the Latin genius with the Spanish spirit. But, triumphantly, from Palermo to Paris, from Cadiz

* “ Latin race, arouse thyself ! With thy hair loosened To the holy air of the Tabor, Thou art the race of light, Who livest in enthusiasm and joy : Thou art the apostolic race That sets the bells a-chiming ; Thou art the trumpet that proclaims ; Thou art the hand that sows the seed. O Latin race, arise ! ”

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to Cherbourg, the Latin genius, the Latin spirit, the Latin League ! ”

Whether by accident of poetical and technical congruity, or because of a deeper intent, this *Ode to the Latin Race* (among the *Sirventes* or Odes in Mistral's most varied and charming volume, *Lis Isclo d'Or*, *The Golden Isles*) follows that terrible outburst of rage and passionate refusal to despair, written in September 1871, *Lou Roucas de Sisèr* (*The Rock of Sisyphus*)—with its bitter cry, “ Erian, a passa téms, un poble ” (“ Of old we were a people ! ”), and its fierce final anathema on the Emperor who had sold France by his selfish pride and ambition. “ *Siegues mandí, mandí, mandí !* ” (“ Be for ever accurst, accurst, accurst ! ”).

It is as the “ Trumpet of the South,” however, even more than as the chief prophet of the Latin Union, that Mistral is revered in Provence. To-day, we fear, his heart beats less high when he recalls some of the stanzas in his beautiful book *Calendau*—that masterpiece somewhat overshadowed by the overwhelming popularity of *Morvan* and the Ionic variety of the composite *Lis Isclo d'Or*—as for example, the invocation in *Lou Prémair* (i.e., *Cançó*).

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*Amo de moun país . . .
Amo de-longo renadivo,
Amo jouïouso e fièro e vivo,
Qu'endibes dins lou brut dou Rose e dou Rousau
Amo di seavo armounïouso
E di calanco souleïouso,
De la patrio amo piouso,
T'apelle ! encarno-te dins mi vers prouvençau ! **

So much curiosity has been excited by the titles *Felibre* and *Felibrige* that a word should be said on the subject. The designation "*Felibre*"—equivalent in the common parlance to troubadour, minstrel, poet, but originally signifying rather a bard in the Celtic sense, a singer and poet, but also a priest or doctor of the divine law and the history of men—was found by Mistral in an old Provençal canticle (a song in a mystery play or Christmas pastoral), where Mary is alluded to as meeting Christ in the temple "among the seven *felibres* of the law" ("li set felibre de la lei"). As later

* "Soul of my country . . . Soul eternally reborn [renewed], Joyous and proud and alive, Who [as a war-horse] neighs against the sound of the Rhône and the Rhône-wind [idiomatically "lou Rousau" means the wind from the further side of the Rhône—i.e., the west wind]; Soul of our musical woods and our sunlit havens, Pious soul of my Fatherland, I call thee ! May'st thou become incarnate in my Song of Provence ! "

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versions gave either "doctors," "bards," "poets," or "wise men," Mistral at once recognised the comprehensive value of the recovered ancient word. Neither he nor other philologists, however, have yet definitively settled its derivation, though, among other specialists, Mistral himself thinks it possible, and Gaston Paris and d'Arbois de Jubainville are convinced, that the word is one of the many Celtic survivals in the Provençal language, and is composed of the ancient Erse *filea* and *ber*, equivalent to "chief-singer" or "arch-poet." In their contemporary meaning, the word and its derivatives signify: *Felibre*, a poet who is a native of Provence and composes in Provençal—a term adopted, and certainly preferable to the outworn "troubadour" or "trouvère"; *Felibrée*, a bardic gathering, or the *Eistedfodd* or *Mòd* of the Provençals; *Félibresque*, *Félibrique*, two French terms for that which pertains to the Felibres or their works, but the first used rarely now and the second obsolete, the adjectives *Félibréen* having replaced them. The *Felibrige* is the organised fellowship of the Felibres.

In recording the great work done by Roumanille and Mistral, the chiefs, and

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Aubanel and other masters of the Provençal Renaissance, one should not forget, as commonly in France, and even in Provence itself, the pioneer work accomplished by immediate predecessors—men who at least cleared the ground, tilled and sowed and made ready for the great cultivators, the masters of the olive and the vine, who were to come. Allusion has already been made to the brothers Achard of Marseilles and seven comrades, *troubaïres* as they called themselves, who in 1823 published their collective Provençal verse in one volume. At Béziers in 1839 the learned Provençal, J. Azaïs, presided over an influential conference of philologists and archæologists on the origins and composition of the Langue d'Oc. About 1840 two popular and prolific patois-singers, Pierre Bellot of Marseilles and Désanat of Tarascon, decided to publish a special "organ" for the social and literary life and interests of Provence; but, as one wished the periodical to be bilingual and the other that it should be solely in Provençal, the outcome was that Bellot, with Louis Mery, brought out *Lou Tambourinaire et le Ménestrel*, while Désanat inaugurated the longer-lived, more virile and more national *Lou*

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Bouil-Abaisso. Not only did most of the scattered patois-singers contribute to these "organs," but the earliest lyrics and poems of Roumanille, Anselme Mathieu, Mistral, and others less known, also appeared there.

A year after the decease of *Lou Bouil-Abaisso*, which appeared at intervals during six years, was heard the first high note of the Midi. Hitherto only in distant Gascony had the Provençal Muse caught the ear of the outside world. Now from the little town of St. Rémy, the ancient Roman *Glanum*, "the town of gardens, poets, and beautiful women," came the clear and strong voice of Joseph Roumanille, afterwards to be known as the Father of the *Felibrige*. By 1847 Roumanille had published his beautiful idyllic poem *Li Margarideto*, and had written his still finer *Li Sounjarello* (*The Dreamers*), when, at the seminary in Avignon (where he was a young teacher), he met Frédéric Mistral, then a lad who on his neighbouring ancestral farm of Maillane (Maïano) had already begun his lifelong dream of the poetry and romance, of the past and present and future of Provence, of the conservation and purification and definite restoration of its beautiful language. The lad and the young man at

once became intimate friends. Mistral had already a sympathiser, one Anselme Mathieu; and just as at Oxford two young men, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, became intimate friends through reading together one spring day by the waterside a poem by another not much older than themselves, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and in turn gave their allegiance to this revealing poet, so was it with Mistral Mathieu and Roumanille.

The first public outcome of this union of three enthusiasts was the publication early in 1852 of *Li Prouvençalo*, an anthology from the scattered writings or unprinted though widely circulated compositions of the living poets of the Midi. In August of the same year a Congress of Provençal Poets was held at Arles under the presidency of Roumanille. The following year a still more influential gathering was held at Aix, the old Troubadour capital. From the several regions of Provence came representatives, sixty-five in all (only Jasmin refrained, piqued at this extraordinary invasion across what he considered his own frontiers); and, as a result, another and greater anthology was published, *Lou Roumanàgi deis Troubaïres* (1854).

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But the "Centre," the not yet named Felibrige, held itself independent, with its more concentrated and impassioned ideals. On May 21, 1854, seven young Provençal poets—known as the Avignon group—met in the little *château* Font-Ségugne (Vaucluse), the ancestral home of one of them, Pauloun Giéra, and solemnly vowed themselves to purify and restore their native speech and to devote their lives to this end, to poetry, and to Provence. As our "Pre-Raphaelites" were all men of individual power but were profoundly influenced by one dominating and inspiring genius, so was it with this "Avignon group." Roumanille, Mistral, Aubanel, Paul Giéra, Jean Brunet, Alphonse Tavan, Anselme Mathieu—all were men of rare and beautiful powers; but the greatest were the two youngest, Aubanel and Mistral; and the Rossetti of these "Pre-Raphaelites" was Mistral. But here, it may be as well to add, after this accident of analogy all likeness ends.

Thus was formed the Felibrige, afterwards to become a League so great and comprehensive; but Provence has not known any more truly characteristic singers than the first seven Felibres, or any poets

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so great as Mistral—"the emperor of the Midi," as the people proudly call him, perhaps the greatest poet whom France has produced—and Théodore Aubanel, "the nightingale of the South."

Of the work of one or two of those early Felibres it is not easy now to find more than a few scattered poems. These must be sought in anthologies, in the Provençal periodicals, in the annual almanack of the Midi (now approaching its fiftieth volume, and a continual source of interest and pleasure, since its first appearance as *L'Armana Prouvençau per lou bel an de Diéu* 1855). Neither Paul Giéra nor Jean Brunet published any collection of their poetry, and Tavan and Mathieu have been content to remain as respectively the authors of *Amour e Plour* and *La Farandoulo*, beautiful books, but a strangely meagre output for men of brilliant promise who began thus and have since given us no more than fragments. Jean Brunet published nothing in book-form in his lifetime but a pamphlet entitled *Bachiquello sus La Luno* (*Bagatelles on the Moon*), but his poems in the *Armana* and elsewhere are admired. There is more individuality, with a stronger national accent, in the poetry of Pauloun Giéra, who

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died a young man. Students interested in Provençal poetry should consult an interesting but now somewhat rare volume, edited by Roumanille and Mistral and published by the former at Avignon. Entitled *Un Liame de Rasin*, it comprises, besides biographical notices and representative verses of Jean Reboul (an excellent poet and a good baker of Nîmes), Castil-Blaze, Adolphe Dumas, and Toussaint Poussel, the fifteen pieces left by the Felibre Paul Giéra, collectively entitled *Li Galejado*.

We have seen it frequently stated in Parisian chronicles that two other eminent French men of letters, Provençal by birth and upbringing, were associated with Mistral in the inauguration of the Felibrige: Alphonse Daudet and Paul Arène. There is, however, no basis for the statement. These two masters of French prose, perhaps the most supple and delicate prose in French literature, owed much to the Provençal genius, which they inherited as a birthright, and to the Provençal background of life and nature which was a continual inspiration to both; but neither wrote in his native dialect, or till long after the Felibrige was an influential and well-known League of the Midi. Daudet, indeed, is not known to have

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written more than a single set of verses in Provençal—*La Cabano* (*The Little Cabin*, or *Moor-cot*), which appeared in 1880, in the April number of the periodical *La Farandole*—for he did not really himself write, as commonly averred, the Provençal version of the *Lettres de mon Moulin*. *La Cabano* is charming, graceful, and its few lines convey the desiderated atmosphere of a vast wind-filled solitude; but they have the suggestion of a *tour de force*, of a literary accomplishment—as has so much of the work, both in verse and prose, of Jean Aicard, probably now in Paris and France generally the most widely read of all living Provençal writers, partly because of the immense success of his powerful and picturesque romance, *Le Roi de Camargue*, and greatly owing to the fact that he writes solely in French. It is significant that, though a Languedocien—for the great romancist of the Midi was born at Nîmes—Daudet's *Cabano* is written in the pure Provençal of Arles and the Rhône. Paul Arène, who was born at Sisteron, one of the least known but not least fascinating and picturesque of the smaller Provençal towns, never collected his scattered Provençal verses, but these may be found in the

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Armana and other annuals or periodicals of the Midi, and have invariably the same freshness, charm, distinction, and beauty as characterise the French writings of this exquisite prosaist, the author of *Jean des Figues*, *La Gueuse Parfumée*, *La Vraie Tentation de Saint Antoine*, and other masterpieces in the *genre* of the short story.

Of Tavan and Anselme Mathieu a further word must be said, for though so little known beyond the somewhat vague frontiers of Provence, their names are fixed stars in the galaxy of the Felibrige. Tavan is still alive, though he has long ceased to write, or at least to publish. Born in 1833 at Château-Neuf-de-Gadagne, a beautiful region of Vaucluse, he was—what he has remained—a true son of the soil, one of those peasant-aristocrats who have been the pride and glory of Provence. He lived the sane, arduous life of a man of the field and olive orchards till he was about twenty, by which time his remarkable poetic talent had proved itself. Drafted into the army, fortune took him to Rome during the days of the French occupation; but a serious mischance occurred there, for he fell a victim to malaria. Later, alike unfit for

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military service and for field-labour, he obtained a clerical post in connection with the P. L. M. Railway, and has been a railway *employé* ever since—that is, for the greater part of his life. Alphonse Tavan is none the less a peasant in nature, thought, and expression, and it is as a beautiful and refined poet of the people that he is loved. The shortness of his allotted spell of happiness saddened but did not embitter him: when he lost his dearly loved wife and little girl he held them near to him in an exquisite lyric memory. In his preface to his one published collection, *Love and Tears*, he writes :

Commonly the life of the poet is reflected in his poetry, and in my case it is but right frankly to admit that all my life is mirrored in these verses. I am but a peasant, and have seen little, have little learning, few acquirements, but I could not do otherwise than sing what I have so deeply felt, my own joys and sorrows, that is to say, my life. Thus it is that these rustic airs are not idle carols of the wind, but true songs from a human heart.

And therein is the secret of their compelling charm, the reason why to this day *Love and Tears* is a beloved book in many a Provençal *mas*, or valley cottage, or hillside *cabano*. That it is so little known elsewhere

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in France is because no French translation was made by the author, nor has been since made by any admirer. Of Tavan's less intimately personal poems some are now classic, as, for example, his early lyrical piece entitled *Li Frisoun de Marieto* (*Mariette's Curls*), than which Béranger never wrote anything more gay and dainty, with its delightful idolatry of two coquettish curls on a pretty young girl's lustrous brow—

*Pichot frisoun descaussane,
Merviho de noste vilage—**

that begins so characteristically with an allusion to this village beauty as "fresco e lisqueto coume un idu" ("as fresh and shiny as an egg"). Another, of a fine nature, that evokes the strong national note, is the *sirvente* (or species of ode) called *Prouvenço e Troubadour* (*Provence and her Singers*), a kind of symphony on the chord struck in Mistral's *Calendau*.

*O flour, erias trop proumierenco !
Nacioun en flour, l'espaso trencu
Toun expandido ! . . . †*

* "Dear little lawless curls, the marvel of our village."

† "O flower of Provence, too soon was thy blossoming: O nation in flower, the sword cut thee off in thine early beauty."

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Here the poet recalls how the Provençal singers carried the art of poetry and the *fine fleur* of life into other countries, and how all Europe listened with rapt delight to this honey-sweet voice : "l'Europe s'estasio a vosto melicouso e siavo pouësió." And this joy, everywhere audible in the old Provençal poetry, was, says the poet, and truly, the first glad modern expression of the romance and beauty and fidelity of love, "for their poetry is all love" :

*L'amour ! aquelo flour poulido
Aquelo flour dóu mes de mai,
Ateno l'avié pas culido
Li Mouro e li Latin nimai ;
Vous-áutri sias vengu : la floureto óudourouso,
Embaumo vosto amo amourouso,
L'amour vous alargo si doun :
Escampant vòsti cor, courrès tóuti li terro :
Bernat de Ventadour enébrio l'Anglo-terro,
Giraud de Bournélh, l'Aragoun.*

*Ves l'Italie e l'Alemagno,
Coume se souvènon de vous !
Vosto flour crèis, vosto flour gagno
Li serre li mai auturous :
Beatris la divino e Lauro l'estelado,
Sus l'aubo roso encimelado,
S'emplanon amount dins l'azur,
Car Petrarco e lou Dante an senti vosto flamo,
An beisa vosto flour, an coumprès vòstis amo,
An respira voste amour pur !*

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*Erias trop béu . . . mais la tempêsto
Agouloupo nosto nacioun ! **

Another beautiful and stirring ode, the *servente* entitled *Ma Maestresso*, is universally known in Provence, and is even in some degree an accepted national chant. The "mistress" that the poet sings is no beautiful woman, is not even Provence, but Liberty. The poem appeals to all who can cry with the author: "Ai la fe que trasporto, ai l'espéro qu'esbriho," "I have the faith that

* "Love, this beautiful flower, this flower of life's springtide, neither the Moor nor the Roman, nor Athens herself, has truly culled it: but you, Provençal singers of old, come . . . and in its fragrant beauty embalm your very soul, and Love dowers you with every gift he has to give. With hearts uplifted you wander now to the ends of the earth. Bernard de Ventadour intoxicates England with his song, and all Spain listens entranced to Giraud de Borniel.

"And Italy and Germany, can they ever forget you? The Flower of Song grows, may be gathered, on their proudest heights! The divine Beatrice, the starry Laura, shine from on high, twin-planets over the rose and azure of Dawn—for Dante and Petrarch lit their hearts at your flame, have kissed your sacred flower and breathed its spiritual fragrance, and known that pure and perfect love.

"You were too beautiful . . . the tempest broke—and our nation was no more!"

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uplifts, and hope unquenchable." It is a passion, not a deep devotion only, that he sings, and a passion that strengthens with the passing years :

*Siéu amourous bén mai, O bén mai ! Ma mestresso
Es dïvo. En béuta passo e Minervo e Venus :
D'elo raive, e'n pantai . . . ma mestresso es
divesso.**

It is, however, as much a Christian as a pagan cry :

*Lou Crist, noste grand priéu, soun plus caud calig-
naire,
Vougué la prouclama. . . †*

The poem ends :

*Siéu dóu pople e moun cor i'a douna ma tendresso,
E vous díse lou noum de ma bello mestresso :
Ma Mestresso es la Liberta !*

The late Anselme Mathieu, one of the leading members of the Felibrige, and famous on account of his unique achievement, *La Farandoulo*, was also a Vaclusien, and born too at a "Château-Neuf," though the

* " More and more I love her. My mistress is godlike. In beauty she excels Minerva and Venus. I dream of her, and in my dreams . . . my mistress is a goddess."

† " Christ, our great chief and her most ardent votary, wished to proclaim her. . . ."

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birthplace of the "Felibre di poutoun" ("the poet of kisses") was the lovely Château-Neuf-du-Pape, between Orange and Avignon. Like Mistral, Mathieu came of good Provençal stock, and of parents who spoke only the native tongue of the Midi; he was Mistral's schoolfellow at Avignon and his fellow-student for three years at Aix, whose literary associations and beautiful neighbourhood inspired both poets. Anselme Mathieu, Mistral, and Aubanel are the "aristocrats" of the Provençal writers, and the note of distinction revealed itself early in the young singer from Vaucluse in his admirable translations into pure Provençal of some of the finest odes and lyrics of Virgil and Catullus. Those who would know more of the man and his life and life-work should consult Mistral's intimate and generous preface to *La Farandoulo*, wherein he alludes to his friend's work as one of the loveliest fruits, as a perfect fruit, from the tree of Provençal genius, and adds that, for the turn of the phrase, the lovely suggestiveness of the thought and metrical variety and suppleness, the poetry of Mathieu more than that of any other contemporary resembles the *fine fleur* of Troubadour song. This preface is well

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worth perusal for its own sake. Mistral invariably writes beautiful prose, at once virile and delicate, and in the mass of his miscellaneous sketches, studies, reminiscences, introductions, &c., there are few better examples of his charm as *prosateur* than this preface to *La Farandoulo*.*

What he says of *La Farandoulo* may be summed up in a Provençal phrase now become classical in the Midi: "You will find here young girls, flowers, and kisses, and if you love kisses, flowers, and young girls, *The Farandole* will content you."

The book consists of some forty-five poems and lyrics, grouped in three sections, *Lis Aubado* (*The Aubades*, or *Songs at Sunrise*), *Li Souleiado* (*Songs of the Noontide*), and *Li Serenado* (*Serenades*—by implication, *Songs of Dusk and Love*). Many of these are in light, joyous measures, with a Burns- or Béranger-like lilt, as the song of one Gatouno, who was ill with love:

Gatouno,
Malautouno,
Malautouno d'amour,
Paureto!
I floureto
Countaro si doulour.

* *La Farandoulo*, par Anselme Mathieu (second edition, with French translation). *Avans-Prepaus*

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But perhaps Mathieu is most successful in the quatrain, to which he gave a new swift and deft movement, as in the altogether delightful *Coy Maid* (*La Paurouso*), or *The Old Vineyard* (*La Vignasso*), the finest vine-chant of the Midi :

*L'agoulènço de ti bouqueto,
Just n'ai beisa l'espino, Agueto,
Just l'espino ! . . . E pièi, que ié fai ?
Un poutoun encaro ! . . . Ai ! Ai ! Ai ! **

Or :

*Ai uno vigno à Castéu-Nôu,
Dins un valoun di Coumbo-Masco,
Sus lo revès d'un degoulòu :
Clafis ma tino, emplis mi fiasco.†*

(Introduction) par Frédéric Mistral. (Avignon : Roumanille, 1868.)

* " From the wild-rose of thy mouth, I have but kissed a little thorn away—just a little thorn—no more, and what is that ? Now, one real kiss ! . . . Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! "

† " I have a vine at Chateau-Neuf,
In an enchanted valley,
Lone in a rocky ravine :
Ah, but my cellar and flasks remember it ! "

The writer first heard *Lo Vignasso* recited in a little arbour, over " old wine of Crau," in the wild highlands of Vauvenargues, and on inquiring what was the actual meaning of " Coumbo-Masco," was told that " li Coumbo-Masco " were " enchanted valleys," or " valleys of the bewitched."

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The wine of the Enchanted Valley, from the old vineyard planted two hundred years or more ago among the broom and thyme in the honey-pale moonshine, amid fairy laughters, has intoxicated many a poetic brain beside that of Anselme Mathieu. One thinks of "lou vin dou valoun di Coumbo-Masco" as no less symbolical than the Fay in Mistral's *L'Amiradou*.

*Au castèu de Tarascoun
I'a 'no rèino, i'a 'no fado,
Au casteu de Tarascoun
I'a 'no fado que s'escound.**

It is perhaps difficult now to understand aright the far-reaching influence as well as vogue of Joseph Roumanille ; some, much of it no doubt, was personal. Roumanille had a dominant individuality as remarkable as that of Victor Hugo, with a passionate enthusiasm and ardour for Provence and Provençal literature equalled only by Frédéric Mistral. Of these two great influences—one the influence of a remarkable mind and of a true, if not a great poet, the other the influence of a master-mind and

* " In the Château of Tarascon
Is a queen, is a Fay,
In the Château of Tarascon
Is a Fay who hideth."

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of the greatest living poet of the Latin races—it would be superfluous to write here in detail. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Scandinavian studies on Roumanille and Mistral have appeared by scores, and if these writers are less known and less appreciated among ourselves than among other nations it is by no means wholly from lack of interpreters, from the first faithful if not very flexible translation of Mistral's *Mirèio* (by an American, Miss Preston) to the charming *Embassy to Provence* of Mr. Thomas A. Janvier. In France a hundred writers have dealt with Mistral and the Felibres, in books, treatises, studies, articles, anthologies, and individual translations, perhaps none so authoritatively and ably as M. Paul Mariéton.* So great, indeed, is the library of books dealing with modern Provence that only a few enthusiasts could possibly cope with it. On Mistral alone quite a library of "studies" has accumulated.

But, to-day, when we take up the (still untranslated) *Li Margarideto*, or the more

* E.g., in the long and important articles on the Felibres, and on Mistral, Aubanel, &c., in the *Grande Encyclopédie*, and in books, notably *La Terre Provençale*.

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widely known *Li Sounjarello* of Roumanille, it is to read with no little wonder what one has so often heard praised as masterpieces. For these poems, masterly as in a sense they are, have the beauty of *genre* rather than the final and universal beauty. They differ in kind from *The Rhône* or *Calendau* or even the *Mirèio* of Mistral, bearing somewhat of the same relation to these as the poetry of Tannahill or Ferguson to the "central" poetry of Burns; or, let us say, as the essentially parochial stories of John Galt to the universal romances of Sir Walter Scott.

It is regrettable that *Li Margarideto* has not been translated into French, for in France justice has not been done to this pioneer work of the Provençal revival. When it appeared in 1847, it came upon the poets of the Midi as convincingly as the genius of Burns came upon the innumerable minor singers of Scotland. This delightful idyllic poem is in four sections: *Quan Li-Z-Agrena Flourissien*, *Quan Li Bla se Maduravon*, *Quan Li Feuio Toumbavon*, *Ou cantoun dou Fiò*, which may be rendered, *When the Blossoms Whiten*, *When the Grain Ripens*, *When the Leaves Fall*, and *By the Winter-Hearth*. Popular as

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The Daisies, *Li Margarideto*, was, and has remained, Roumanille's fame was far more widely enhanced by the lovely lyrical narrative - poem *Li Sounjarello* (*The Dreamers*), published five years later (1852); and was perhaps more intimately and permanently deepened by his beautiful *Li Nouvè* (*Noëls*), some forty in all, published first in magazines and journals or "fascicules" between 1845 and 1859. The vogue of *Li Sounjarello*, as a poetic love-tale, resembled that enjoyed, with us, in the mid-Victorian period, by *The Gardener's Daughter*. The poem has considerable metrical diversity, apart from the little lyrics it enshrines, but here is a representative divisional section :

Dindouleto, parla me d'èu :
En travessant la mar, avès pas vis moun bèu ?
Dessu si mas bessai avès fu la pausetò.
Es que vous a rèn di se ma mio Leleto ? . . .
Acò se m'èro pas fidèu ! . . .
Pamen, plouravo tan quand me laissè souleto,
Que me donnè la croux de sa maire, e l'andèu . . .
Mai que diè ? sièu folo ! . . . Ana lèu, dindouleto,
Ana-ié piènta moun bonjour ;
Pourta-iè su vosti-z-aletò
Moun lèngui, mi pouloun e mi souspir d'amour . . .
*Diga-il que l'espère, ô bravi dindouleto ! **

* "Swallows, tell me of him ! In crossing the

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Besides *Li Margarideto*, *Li Sounjarello*, *Li Nouvè*, and his share in *Prouvençalo* (*The Provençals*) and in that delightful and invaluable annual *L'Armana Prouvençau*, Roumanille published notable minor works in verse, such as *La Part de Dieu* and *Li Flour de Sauvi* (*Flour o' the Sage*), and the longer and more masterly *La Campano Mountado*, a mock-heroic poem in seven cantos, which so capable a critic as M. de Pontmartin ranked as Roumanille's most original production. His complete poetical productions may be had in one volume, modestly entitled *Lis Oubreto* (*Minor Works*).

seas, have you not seen my beloved ? Mayhap you rested on the masts of his ship ? Did he whisper nothing to you of his dear Leleto ? Oh ! if he has not remained true to me ! . . . and yet, how he wept the day he left me all alone, and gave me the little cross that had been his mother's, and the ring. . . . But what am I saying ? I am mad ! . . . Quick, quick, little swallows, breathe on him my morning greeting : carry him on your little wings my impatience, my kisses, my sighs of longing. Whisper that I await him, that I await him, O good little swallows ! "

This quotation is from the original edition. It was after the publication of *Li Sounjarello* that the Provençal language was given its classic uniformity, mainly by or through the influence of Mistral. Later versions of *Li Sounjarello* have a revised text.

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In Provence there is nothing of his so loved among the poor hill-folk and vintagers as his *Noëls*. Saboly himself, the prince of "the Singers of Bethlehem," never wrote anything lovelier, more exquisitely tender, than *Li Crècho*, with its plea of the Seraph to God, that when the little Jesus first knew mortal cold in the manger at Bethlehem :

*Es moun rire que l'assoulavo,
Es moun alo que l'acatavo ;
L'escaufave emé moun alen.**

Last Yuletide, the present writer heard sung one midnight in the streets of Aix—*Aïs, la antico vilo di Troubaïres*—another lovely *Noël* of Roumanille's, *La Chato Avuglo, The Blind Girl*, of which the first stanza runs thus :

*Èro lou jour tant bèu qu'uno Vierge enfantavo
A Betelen ;
E soun fru benesi, de la fre tremoulavo
Su'n pau de fen ;
Lis ange, eilamoundant, tout-bèu-just acabaron
Soun "Gloria,"
E, de tout caire, au jas pastre e pastresso anavon
S'ageinouia.†*

* "It was my smile that consoled Him, my wings that sheltered Him, my breath that warmed Him."

† "It was on the wondrous day when a Virgin bore a child at Bethlehem. This blessed fruit of

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Roumanille, the son of a gardener, and of a mother "of the old race of the Gardeners of St. Rémy, the town of gardens," was born among the beautiful gardens he so often lovingly described, on August 8, 1818. Even in his long and ardently enthusiastic as well as arduous life he was acknowledged as the "chef de départ"; and since his death a few years ago his fame has grown, not lessened, as the most potent and victorious general in the great movement of which Mistral is the commander-in-chief.

It is but right to add a word on Madame Roumanille, wife of one famous Felibre, and, as Rose-Anaïs Gras, sister of another, herself a fine poet and a woman who, as friend and publisher of so many of the poets of the Midi, has had a very real influence on the development of contemporary Provençal literature. A little poem of hers in sonnet form suggests comparison with *The Toys* of Coventry Patmore, and is no less pathetic and dignified. Called *Lou*

the Divine Love trembled in the mortal cold of the manger : but the thronging angels rejoicingly burst into song, singing the 'Gloria' there on high, as the shepherd folk here on earth, bending their knees before the new-born Son."

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Chambroun, The Little Room, it may be thus rendered, perforce baldly, in prose :

Here, in a corner, are her little cart, her doll, her rattle, lying abandoned on the floor beside her pretty baby-skirt ; yonder on the wall of the silent room hangs the little one's amber necklace : dust, like a shroud, covers the desolate cradle. Here, midway, are her tiny blue slippers, so lively ever, so restless. . . . O dear God, the music of those little pattering feet only so brief a while ago. . . . Hist ! some one comes . . . I hear steps. Of this little room say nothing, not a word. Never again will the mother enter it.

There is no need to dwell in detail on the work and achievement of Frédéric Mistral. His fame is in all lands. Translations of his chief works exist in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese—and not in the Latin tongues only, but in German, Dutch, Scandinavian, Russian. In English *Mirèio* has been at least twice translated. The greatest poet of Provence, he is also by far the greatest living poet of France—having, indeed, within the definitely narrower limits of lyrical excellence, no rival in any of the Latin races save, perhaps, Carducci. As scholar, as poet, as man of letters, as the pioneer of the intellect of the South and the captain of its soul, as a Provençal of the

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Provençals, with the greatness and nobility of his nature and the unequalled charm of his personality, Mistral is, in truth, worthy of his popular designation, "the Emperor of the Midi." *Mirèio*, *Calendau*, *Lis Isclo d'Or*, *Lou Rose* are already classics. Lamartine's prophecy about "this new-risen genius at Avignon" has been justified to the full. The worship of Mistral in Provence is unequalled; such a triumph as his, when ten thousand people in the vast amphitheatre at Orange simultaneously arose on his unexpected entrance, is unparalleled in contemporary homage, except perhaps by the more fickle and transitory tribute of Paris to Victor Hugo.

In his preface to *Li Parpaïoun Blu* (the amazing Provençal achievement of that adopted Felibre, the Irish scholar and poet, W. Bonaparte-Wyse) Mistral speaks of "lou Reiaume dóu Souléu," and again of "la flamo felibrenço"; and of no Provençal, living or dead, could it be said that more than Frédéric Mistral he had "the poetic flame," or that he had as good a claim to the sceptre of "the Kingdom of the Sun." Scattered through his many addresses and prefaces are scores of characteristic sayings which reveal the man, but few perhaps better than

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words such as these : " I believe in the audacity which accomplishes miracles ; and I believe that the higher one aspires the higher one attains." For Mistral, as for Mirabeau on a famous occasion, " impossible " is a stupid word. For, in truth, he has achieved the seeming impossible. In that extraordinary dialect-revival so noticeable in several countries at this moment, no one man has had so potent an influence as Mistral. He has done three wonderful things, remarked an eminent Felibre to the present writer :

He put a soul into a revived language ; he has himself used that language as Dante and Petrarch used Italian, as Heine used German ; and, lest its mortal body should perish, he has embalmed it for all time in that marvellous triumph of philological science, *Lou Tresor dou Felibrige !*

Born in 1830 at Maillane, an ancestral property near the small village of the same name in the arrondissement of Arles and within a few miles of St. Rémy—" St. Rémy, with its gardens, its gentle folk, and pretty girls, its lovely and picturesque neighbourhood, its ancient ruined temples and arches, its poetic tradition, the St. Rémy so associated with Roumanille and Félix Gras and Marius Girard "—Frédéric Mistral, "Capoulié

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dou Felibrige," has lived there ever since, a peasant, a prince, and a poet. In the history of modern Provençal literature there are no landmarks more familiar than *Mirèio* (1859), *Calendau* (1867), *Lis Isclo d'Or* (1875), *Nerto* (1880), *La Rèino Jano* (1890), and *Lou Rose* (*The Rhône*, 1894). These six works also—to change the metaphor—are milestones on the road followed by the minor developments in the last half-century. Not even the fame of Jasmin equalled that which came to Mistral when the beautiful idyllic romance of *Mirèio* took Provence and all France by storm—at first in great part, no doubt, because of that literary bomb-shell, the famous pronouncement of the then all-powerful Lamartine that (in effect)

in Mistral a great epic poet is born, a true Homeric poet in this day, a primitive poet in this age of decadence, a poet who has given a new sensation and a new scope to modern literature, a poet who has created a language of an idiom, as Petrarch created Italian.

Though that superb epical achievement *Calendau* did not have the vogue of its predecessor, it is now, perhaps, the more widely admired. The earlier poem may be said to embody the Provence of the plains

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and pastoral valleys, the Provence of the Crau, the Camargue, and of the Rhône ; the other, to embody the Provence of mountain and sea. But of all Mistral's books none is now so familiar, so loved and admired, as his collection of dramatic lyrics, ballads, odes, and other poems, collectively entitled *Lis Isclo d'Or* (*The Golden Isles*). Here all his most famous lyrical triumphs—from the *Ode to the Latin Race* to the delightful and so often quoted *Lou Prègo-Diéu* (a kind of grasshopper)—are to be found. *Lis Isclo d'Or*, in technical mastery, ranks with the finest work of Hugo, Banville, Leconte de Lisle, and Baudelaire, with more of the pulse of universal humanity. *Nerto*, an epical poem in the style of the chivalrous romances and of Ariosto, is a Provençal chronicle of the Popes in Avignon. Though hailed with welcome and crowned by the French Academy, it remains the least widely known (and in Provence the least read) of Mistral's works. The fine tragic drama, *La Rèino Jano*, was more impressive to witness on the stage (especially at Orange) than to read ; and perhaps only to Provençals is there compelling magic in the name of the famous princess round whose memory

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so many native legends, romances, songs, and ballads have gathered. In *The Poem of the Rhône* Mistral has produced his epical *chef-d'œuvre*. Here, unquestionably, he justifies that supreme praise of Lamartine's which so profoundly impressed the whole European world of culture.

Of two of his most valued colleagues and literary contemporaries, Félix Gras and Marius Girard, though not members of the original "league of poets," much might be written here were there space to spare. Certainly no student of contemporary Provençal literature can afford to overlook M. Girard's *Lis Aupiho* (*The Lesser Alps*, behind St. Rémy), published in 1888, and the larger and finer collection, with its often valuable and always interesting notes, *La Crau* (the great stony plain of the Bouches du Rhône, contiguous to, but distinct from, the vaster Camargue, the *Maremma* of Provence). Marius Girard is one of the most distinguished of the Felibres of to-day, and as he is still vigorous in mind and body we may look for further works of fresh collections from his fertile pen. His contemporary, Félix Gras, is much more widely known, and within the last five years, indeed, has, as a romancist, won also a

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wide circle of readers in the United States and Great Britain through the admirable translation by Mrs. Catherine Janvier of his trilogy of *The Terror* (*The Reds of the Midi*, *The Terror*, *The White Terror*). Four years younger than Marius Girard, Félix Gras (1844), while still a young man (*i.e.*, in his thirty-second year), published *Li Carbounié* (*The Charcoal-burners*), and at once became famous. The note struck was a new one, intensely virile, robust, sonorous. This "épopée" in twelve cantos has no real rival in Provençal literature after Mistral's *Calendau* or *Nerto*: indeed few works of the kind can even be compared with it, except perhaps the splendidly picturesque *Chansou Lemouzina* of the Abbé Roux, the great poet of the Limousin. In later life he achieved another success in kind, with *Toloza*, a *geste Provençale* in twelve cantos dealing with the famous crusade of Simon de Montfort. In 1887 he published, through Savine of Paris (one of the few instances where a Provençal book has been printed beyond the unofficial frontier of the Midi), his *chef-d'œuvre*, *Lou Roumancero Prouvençau*. The book consists of a score or so of romantic ballads or ballad-romances, and in metrical strength, poetic virility, and

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compelling charm recalls no contemporary poetry so much as Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics and Romances*. Perhaps the finest is the fifth, the barbaric *Roumanso de Damo Guiraud*. Others as notable and stirring are *Lou Rèi Reinié* (*King René*), *La Roumanso de la Rèino Jano*, *Guihen de Cabestang*, the pathetic *Blanche de Simiane*, and the savage *La Dama Tibor*—all, and *The Lady Tibor* in particular, strongly suggestive of our own wild North-Country ballads, such as *Glasgerion*, *Burd Helen*, and the like. In all his poetry, epical or brief lyrics or episodic poems, sonorous lines continually recur, with a sound of the sea or as of the mountain wind :

*Es-ti la grando mar ? Es-ti la grand mountagno ?
Sarié-ti lou mistrav que bramo e coumbouris ? **

and lovely lines, full of aerial light and sound, such as

Lou long salut que fan soute vènt li piboulo.†

In connection with the success of his romances of *The Terror*, it may be added that, though the prose literature of the

* "Is it the great sea ? or the voice of the hills
Or the wild tumult of the mountain-wind ?"

† "The long swaying of a poplar to the wind."

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Provençal revival cannot vie with that in verse, it is still remarkable and fascinating. We need allude only to the most outstanding works, such as the *Contes Prouvençau* of Roumanille, the brilliant, vivacious, and highly flavoured as well as highly coloured *Li Papalino* (*Tales of Papal Avignon*) of Félix Gras, the fine and austere simple *Memòri d'un Gnarro* (*Reminiscences of a Farm-hand*) of Baptiste Bonnet, the vivid *Scenes of Provençal Life* of the Toulonaise Charles Senès, and those strange, bewilderingly erudite, flame-coloured, but inartistically wrought antique "classical" romances *L'Agonie* and *Byzance* of the poor peasant Jean Lombard (whose early death in 1891 was practically due to privation bordering on starvation). As for the larger "world" which cannot read Provençal, and has not time or care to look for the less eminent men, it can well rest content with the work of the delicate genius who gave to all countries *Tartarin*, *Numa Roumestan*, and the *Lettres de mon Moulin*; with that of the exquisite artist, Paul Arène, whose work is the very essence, the very fragrance, of Provence; and with that of picturesque and vivid romancists such as Jean Aicard. One of the most notable prose works by

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any Provençal writer, though dealing with alien life and conditions, is the strangely impressive *Fumeurs d'Opium* of the late Jules Boissière; another, more recent, more powerful if less rare in quality, less subtle in style, is Louis Bertrand's *Le Sang des Races*. Doubtless all the Provençal romancists will henceforth write in French, for they are in the same case as the Welsh-born or Irish-born novelists, who might prefer to write, but who cannot get published, tales in Welsh or Irish. Among these younger men the most promising are Emmanuel Delbousquet, Louis Bertrand, and Joachim Gasquet, the latter a young Aixois who, besides having already won high distinction by his beautiful verse and the range and distinction of his prose, is achieving a continually growing influence through his able editing of *Le Pays de France*, one of the most interesting of French monthly magazines.

Another writer of whom something should be said, the more as he is in danger of being overlooked by the younger generation of Provençal students, is the late Jean-Baptiste Gaut, one of the most distinguished sons of Aix, and an influential member of the Felibréen league. His prose writings—

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notably his *Résumé de l'Histoire du Roi René* and his now rare *Poètes et la Poésie de Provence*—are as interesting as they are erudite. His lyrical drama *Uno Court d'Amour* was crowned at the Floral Fêtes at Montpellier ; and his *Lou Mau d'Amour* (*Love-Sickness*), produced in 1881, has the distinction of being the first and still the best comic opera on the Provençal stage. A more noteworthy dramatic achievement was his earlier drama in three acts, with many songs, called *Lei Mouro* (*The Moors*), published about 1875.

Although Mistral, Aubanel, Gras, and other Provençal poets have written sonnets, the sonnet has never taken a prominent place in the poetic literature of the Midi, and is never a “popular,” always a “literary,” form. But Gaut has the distinction of being the Provençal sonneteer *par excellence*. His *Lei Sèt Pecat Capitan* (*The Seven Deadly Sins*) is a notable collection ; and now not only the sonnet amateur but the literary enthusiast may consider himself lucky who obtains that fantastically delightful collection, *Sounet, Souneto e Sounaio* (*Sonnets, Tinkles, and Idle Rhymes*), published in 1874, with a “Sounadisso” or sonnet preface by Mistral, wherein the great poet

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half playfully appreciates his friend's singular qualities—saying, “Qu’il joue aux osselets, ou qu’il chasse aux perdreaux, ou que dans la rivière il fasse mordre quelque anguille, un petit vent de Grèce agite son habit.”

We have left to the last one of the greatest of the Felibres, and, as we believe, one of the finest lyric poets whom France has produced, Théodore Aubanel. Aubanel is the poet whose name above all others in Provence causes the chord of love to thrill in the hearts of the young. He is, supremely, the poet of youth and love and beauty. Throughout his writings we may hear the refrain of his lyric *La Glòri de Vau-Cluso* :

*L'Amour es la vido,
La vido es l'amour,*

as throughout all his own days he heard the self-same song :

*L'amour nous convido
A cuie li flour.*

And this for the greater part sufficed him ; this instinct of life, this passion for beauty, for love, for the sunshine and the blithe delight of spring and summer in his beloved Provence, for “la cigalo di piboulo, la

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bouscarlo di bouissoun, lo grihet di fari-goulo, tout canto sa cansoun." In his glad content with the beauty of the world, the world of youth and love and songs, he struck a note which endeared him to his compatriots :

*Tout auceloun amo sou nis :
Noste ceu blu, noste terraire
Soun pèr nous-autre un paradis.**

His posthumous collection, *Lou Rèire dou Soulèu* (idiomatically, *From Beyond the Grave* ; poetically, *The Afterglow*), is as full as his *chef-d'œuvre*, *Li Fiho d'Avignoun* (*The Girls of Avignon*), of that inspiration of the country regions, *di bastido*, of which he sang in a little canticle for the Festo Felibrenço at Nîmes in 1859 :

*O muso di bastido
De siedo noun vestido
E pamens tant poulido,
Muso di Prouvençau ! †*

Aubanel's printed writings are small in quantity. *La Miougrano Entre-Duberto*

* " Every little bird loves its nest. Our blue sky, our little country, are Paradise for us."

† " O muse of the country places [*lit.* of the farmsteads], Not clad in silk art thou, Yet O most fair to see, Muse of the Provençals ! "

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(*The Half-open Pomegranate*), first privately printed about 1880 (though written many years earlier), and public and complete only in 1888; *Li Fiho d'Avignoun*, published the year of his death, 1886; and *Lou Rèire du Soulèu*, published in 1900, though all or most of the contents had already appeared in periodicals, represent his achievement in lyrical poetry. Besides these books he wrote three dramas in Provençal verse. One of these, the powerful and sombre *Lou Pan dou Pecat* (*The Bread of Sin*) has been published, and, in Paul Arène's somewhat unsatisfactory French version in Alexandrines, was acted in Paris. Of another no trace has been found. The third and most powerful, *Lou Pastre* (*The Herdsman*), though known to exist at the time of his death, is apparently also destroyed or lost. From the little publicly known of it, and some fragments remembered by friends, it is certain that *The Herdsman* was one of the most terrible of modern tragedies, too savagely terrible perhaps for publication to-day. Some idea of it, though even here modified, may be gained from the note about *Lou Pastre* in the appendix to *Lou Rèire dou Soulèu*. The only other book of Aubanel's is the posthumous collection of his letters

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to a friend, the "Mignon" of his idealising and romantic love for "a dear unknown."

There is perhaps no single book of contemporary poetry so full of the atmosphere as well as the sound and colour of beauty as *Li Fiho d'Avignoun*. In it is one supreme masterpiece: "the apple on the topmost bough" of modern pagan poetry. *The Venus of Arles* is, in contemporary poetry, what the Venus of Milo is among all the other treasures of the Louvre. Aubanel's work is all of music, beauty, emotion. His lyrical poems are as full of light and rippling sound as an aspen. One could quote scores of lines such as this quatrain from the pathetically beautiful *Li Piboulo (The Poplars)* :

*Bello lèio de grand pibo
Enfiucado dôu tremount,
Que veses sus l'autro ribo ?
Que veses d'aperamount ? **

Of his lovely *Miougrano*, Mistral truly prophesied, "Li grano di courau de la *Miougrano Entre-Duberto* devendran en Prouvenço lou capelet dis amoureux"—"The coral-red grains of *The Half-open Pomegranate* will

* "Stately alley of great poplars, All aflame with the fires of sunset—What see you, in the valley, From your swaying tops, what see you ? "

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become throughout Provence the chaplet of lovers." It has all the "sentour de l'aubespín, es douço emai amaro"—"all the fragrance of the hawthorn, at once sweet and bitter." New cadences, too, come into this Latin poetry, vaguely suggestive of those of Celtic music :

*De-la-man-d'eila de lamar,
Dins mis ouro de pantaiage,
Souventi-fes iéu fau un viage,
Iéu fau souvent un viage amaro,
De-la-man-d'eila de la mar.**

The whole of the poem (No. xi. in *The Book of Love*) is beautiful with its "Eilalíns" and "De-la-man-d'eilas's," and other melancholy recurrent cadences, as, for example :

*D'erso en erso, sus l'aigo amaro,
Coume un cadabre i mar jita,
En pantai me laisse empouria
I pèd d'acuelo que mèi caro,
D'erso en erso, sus l'aigo amaro.†*

Aubanel spoke for all Provence as well as for himself when he wrote : "La pouèsio

* "To a far land across the sea, oftentimes in my dreaming hours I voyage alone, a bitter voyage of longing oftentimes I make, to a far land across the sea."

† "From hollow to hollow, on the salt wave, as a body thrown upon the waters, in dreams I let myself be carried to the feet of her I love : From hollow to hollow, on the salt wave."

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es lou soulèu, lou soulèu di jouïne e di fort e di bèu"—"Poetry is the sun, the sun of the young and the strong and the beautiful." He sang for all poets when he shaped in music his own device, "Quau canto soun mau encanto."

And, for him, as for many another beautiful singer of human love and loss, an earlier writer long ago said "the deep word":

Quia sine dolore non vivitur in amore.

Let us take leave of Aubanel, and with him of the singers of modern Provence, in fitting words of his own, uttered in one of his poems to his "Laura," his "Beatrice":

*Dins lou vaste camin dis astre barrulant canto dins la joïo.**

If there be that immortality also for the poet, none worthier than Théodore Aubanel could enter upon it. "We are two comrade stars," said Mistral prophetically. And truly both are of the company of "Adonais," "e chi lo scrisse."

* "On the vast road of the wandering stars he sings in joy."

SOME DRAMAS OF GABRIELE
D'ANNUNZIO

(1900)

WHEN we consider the dramatic work of Gabriele D'Annunzio we find that three long plays have been published, *La Città Morta*, *La Gioconda*, and *La Gloria*; that two shorter plays, *Sogno d'un Tramonto d'Autunno* and *Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*, have been issued as booklets; and that the author is now at work on his trilogy, *L'Alessandreide*.

Of the published dramas only the first is well known here, though since Eleonora Duse's magnificent acting of *La Gioconda* in London that play also is familiar to many who understand Italian. Even in France, where D'Annunzio's work is followed with much interest and close attention, *La Gloria* is all but unknown: in Italy itself it has fascinated the few, not the many. One reason, obvious reason, for

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this is, that of the plays *La Città Morta* alone has been translated into French and into English.

To understand the complex genius and Græco-Latin temperament of Gabriele D'Annunzio, one unacquainted with his writings could perhaps in no way gain so swift an insight as to read these two short plays, the *Sogno d'un Tramonto d'Autunno* and *Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*. The one, violent, fevered, intoxicated with colour, convulsed with the very hysteria of passion, is wrought, as it were, in blood-red clay; the other, hushed, delicate, beautiful, exquisite in its very morbidity, intensely rather than overwhelmingly tragic, is wrought in ivory and emerald: the one is a resplendent nightmare, the other a tragic but beautiful dream. In both the same genius reveals itself, in each the extraordinarily marked dual temperament is found at the extreme. If there is no one scene in D'Annunzio's plays so beautiful as that in *La Gioconda*, where la Sirenetta, a mysterious child born of the wind, sun, and sea, unwittingly tortures Silvia Settala in her bitter grief and mutilated beauty, and where, when the lovely sea-girl says she would offer the poor, desolate, mutilated woman her own

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hands were they not so brown and rough,
Silvia answers :

Sono felici le tue mani : toccano le foglie,
i fiori, l'arena, l'acqua, le pietre, i fanciulli, gli
animali, tutte le cose innocenti.

(" Ah, these happy hands of yours—they can
touch the leaves and flowers, the earth and water
and stones, little children, all innocent creatures.")

—if, as I think, there is no scene so poig-
nantly beautiful as this, neither is there,
I think, any succession of scenes or any one
play so beautiful as the *Dream of a Spring
Morning*. Again, there is nowhere in
D'Annunzio's dramas or romances so extreme
a presentment of the sensuously hysterical
side of his nature—the side that in that
wonderful book, *Il Trionfo della Morte*,
permitted him to sink to the grossest
banalities, to a dithyrambic satyriasis,
where the power and beauty of the with-
held while revealed are set aside for the
poor audacity of the explicit—nowhere so
extreme a presentment in this kind, though
without any suggestion of Zolaesque
"realism," as in the *Dream of an Autumn
Sunset*.

I am not certain as to the order in which
D'Annunzio's plays were written, but in
publication the *Dream of a Spring Morning*

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comes first. Certainly it was written not later than early in 1897. Then *La Città Morta* came, 1898; and thereafter were published the *Dream of an Autumn Sunset*, early in 1899; *La Gioconda*, 1899; and *La Gloria* in 1900. The actual date of composition of the remarkable play *La Gloria* is February–March of 1899, written “ai cipressi di Mamalus.”

Although so unique a literary temperament, so individual a master in style, D'Annunzio has been influenced formatively by at least one modern writer, Maurice Maeterlinck. It is seen not only in the occasional Maeterlinckian convention of phrase and repetitive effect, but even in construction. Generally this likeness is mere similarity, but sometimes is recognisable, as where in the opening scene of the fourth act of *Gioconda* la Sirenetta comes shyly upon Silvia:

LA SIRENETTA. Miriconosci? . . . Miriconosci, signora bella?

SILVIA. Ti riconosco, ti riconosco.

LA SIRENETTA. Ma riconosci?

One marked instance of constructional influence is in *La Gloria*, where the second act opens with a scene which, distinct in detail as it is, is yet so much at one in

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kind that one cannot but believe it to be, if not inspired, at least influenced by *L'Intérieur*. The scene represents a room hung with crimson brocade, with two doors, each with a heavy portière, one withdrawn. The room is filled with friends, partisans, old adherents of Cesare Bronte, who lies at death's door in the inner room, "the solemn anticipation of immense catastrophe" going from one to one of this expectant group of watchers.

ONE. Well, has the death-agony begun ?

ANOTHER. Is there no hope ?

ANOTHER. Will he live till dawn ?

SEVERAL (*at once*). We want to see him . . .
we want to see him !

ONE. Silence ! . . . Don't raise your voices.

ANOTHER. No one may go in. . . .

ANOTHER. He will see no one.

ANOTHER. He will see no one whomsoever . . .
not even the doctors.

ANOTHER. He has sent away the doctors. . . .

In the mass of D'Annunzio's dramatic work, however, these are, as I have said, but occasional echoes. Echoes do not detract from the individuality of an original writer : on the contrary, they afford an added interest, showing as they do where one original mind has been influenced by another original mind, and where what has

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been tried with effect by one is tried newly with new effect by another.

The *Dream of a Morning in Spring* (*Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*) is a long one-act play in five scenes. The story is an episode likely found in, or suggested by, mediæval Italian chronicles. The action of the drama is subsequent to the tragic ending of the love of Giuliano and Isabella, as tragic and sudden as that which came upon Paolo and Francesca ; but more terrible, because of the appalling disclosure of blind human helplessness in sleep. We learn, not all at once, that the two beautiful sisters, the Duchess Isabella and Beatrice, lived at Poggio-Gherardi ; that Isabella came to love Giuliano, a handsome young lord of Fontelucente (a principality or seigneurie as vague as "l'Armiranda," the "old Tuscan town") ; and that Beatrice secretly loves his brother Virginio ; that il Duca learned the truth, and one night returned to Poggio-Gherardi, or came suddenly upon Giuliano and Isabella as they lay asleep in her bed-chamber, and silently thrust his long poniard through Giuliano's heart ; that Isabella awoke, perhaps in time to see the sinister face behind her lover's fallen head, and certainly in time

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to be "inundated" in his life-blood, and lay silent and motionless all night, holding her dead lover to her breast, till, at dawn, her women found her death-white, muttering, in still and awful madness. Thereafter, we infer, Isabella has been sent to the ducal retreat at l'Armiranda, to be tended by Teodata and a physician. The drama-motive is the unfolding of her madness in exquisite and unforgettably beautiful fantasy; in the effort of the physician to cure, or at least to alleviate, her mental suffering; in the sudden and perturbing appearance of the dead man's brother, Virginio; in the half-uncertain, half-suggested love of Virginio and Beatrice, or at least of hers for him; in the all but successful healing through a wonderful identification of Isabella with "the green life" of the forest, and in the sudden and final relapse. From first to last there is a terror lest a spot of red be seen. No scarlet or ruddy flower or blossom is allowed in the garden or wood; nothing that can suggest blood—the blood of Giuliano. The reader trembles when a thorn pricks Isabella's white arm, and a red bead of blood catches her startled, remembering eyes; instinctively starts, perhaps, when a scarlet ladybird alights on her white

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robe, moving like a trickling drop. Through scenes of poignant pathos and beauty the play moves till the fantastic, unreal, but strangely fascinating figure of Virginio comes upon the stage. This creature of the woods—for he is this, more than human—is akin to Goethe's Euphorion, to the Faun in *Transformation*, to the figure kneeling by Procris in Piero da Cosimo's familiar picture, to D'Annunzio's own "Sirennetta" in *La Gioconda*. In Virginio and in *La Sirennetta* I do think that while D'Annunzio may consciously be the symbolist, unconsciously or consciously he is following the same instinct of the Renaissance artists (with whom he has so much in common) as made them—say Giovanni Bazzi, or Piero da Cosimo, both so typical—introduce into their pictures pagan or mythological figures, fauns, satyrs, and the like, sometimes with a definite significance, sometimes because of their strange beauty only, their obsession of more than half pagan minds. Nevertheless, *la Sirennetta* may be intended as a symbol of innocent and beautiful young life, and Virginio as a symbol of remote youth—not as commonly understood, not as the youth of men now, but as the primitive youth of man, whose mother is

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Nature. Perhaps it will be easier for the reader to understand something of the vague, yet significant charm of Virginio if I add that he suggests kinship with the central figure in Pater's *Apollo in Picardy*, or that in *Denys l'Auxerrois*.

An undramatic drama : a morbid motive, morbidly worked out—that, doubtless, is what some readers will think of the *Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*. But the play moves ; scene unfolds naturally out of scene ; there is no disenchantment by ill-timed lapse or break. As in all D'Annunzio's, as in all Italian, drama, there is too much and too lengthy monologue. The desert-reminiscences in *La Gioconda*, for example, would hardly be tolerated on the English stage. But in beauty there is, perhaps, nothing else in its kind that that can be compared with this play ; I find no words adequate. Is there any living dramatist who could depict Isabella and her oneness with the "green life" of the woods as D'Annunzio has done ? Even in a fragment, and that a translation, something of this is evident :

ISABELLA. Yes—yes—the horse neighs behind them, while they wander on.—Look, look, doctor ; are not Isabella and the fruit-tree one and the

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same ? [*She moves swiftly to the sunlit orange-tree, and buries her head among its green foliage. Looking towards the old man, and holding with each hand the pliant ends of two branches, she crosses and winds them about her neck and shoulders, remaining thus, mixed with the foliage as though part of it, her face half covered by the green leaves. Her long sleeves are fallen back on her shoulders, and leave her white arms bare.*]

THE DOCTOR. Yes, one and the same thing.

ISABELLA. I see green—as if the pupils of my eyes were two transparent leaves. The little nerves of the leaves are luminous against the sunlight. . . . Oh, a little leaf lapping ! How luminous it is—and soft as wax—as though it would melt in my breath. How tender it is ! How sweet it is ! . . . Make me a green robe, of tender green, so that the little new leaves will have no fear of me when I move among them. . . . I am not Isabella : I am no more Isabella : the green things have taken me to themselves : I am one of them, I am one of them, one and the same thing.

In her lovely helplessness Isabella recalls *Mélisande* and *Selysette*. There is, too, in D'Annunzio's play, as in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a significant ignoring or a blindness to the culpability of the beautiful forlorn transgressor. *Mélisande* is as a little child baffled by winds of unknown and obscure forces ; Isabella has no thought, nor has her sister or *Teodata*, or the old Doctor, that she was taken in her sin, the sweet,

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puzzled sin of youth. To all she is simply beautiful and unfortunate ; no other sentiment is ever dreamed of than pity for her, regret for the slain youth of the lover, a wordless resentment against the sinister slayer, whose action yet seems to all too natural, too inevitable, to arraign.

When the play ends (and D'Annunzio uses repetitive "decoration" as Maeterlinck does, to enhance impression—*e.g.*, the reiterated "Profound silence, interrupted only by the cries of swallows, the tumultuous hum of bees, a rising and falling breath of wind") a final cloud has come upon the mind of Isabella. The last we see of her is as she stands slowly letting fall soft blossoms over her hair, cheeks, lips, hands, remembering nothing now ; stooping to the fallen garland which had meant so much, lifting it, looking at it idly, and with a faint child-like smile murmuring bewilderedly, "*Per una ghirlandetta.*"

The *Dream of a Spring Morning* is not like any play by Maeterlinck, yet, but for the wandering fire of his genius, I do not think it would have been written. It is, in Italian literature, what *Pelléas et Mélisande* is in literature written in French. Nothing so piteous, so beautiful, so delicate, so

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poignantly unforgettable, exists in modern Italian.

There can be no question, however, of how little of Maeterlinck and of how much of D'Annunzio is in the *Dream of an Autumn Sunset*. Here are no reserve, no delicacy, no *nuance*, no vague or deep symbolism, but fierce colour, crude emotions, barbaric cries and instincts, a "Venetian splendour" become a debauch, an atmosphere intolerably surcharged with passion that is a rather savage hysteria, an inchoate panorama of distorted images, a wild *pêle-mêle* of gorgeous barges, torch-lit gondolas, flitting figures; nude courtesans, lawless passions, cunning magicians, and, through all, the insane dementia of the woman Gradeniga, *la Dogaressa*.

This play is shorter than the *Spring Morning*; is not subdivided into scenes, and the dramatic action centres on "la Gradeniga," the Dogaressa. The woman Pentella, the women spies Lucrezia, Caterina, Ordella, Nerissa, and the Slavonian sorceress, are mere stage puppets. The story may or may not be historical or have an historical basis; it is Annunzio's here, and no other's. The drama unfolds itself "at the domain of a patrician of Venice, on the bank of the

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Brenta, bequeathed by one of the doges to his Most Serene widow, now living here in exile." It opens as "the autumnal day is ending in beauty at once rich and sad." D'Annunzio describes the setting of his scene with an opulence of detail which pertains to the romancist rather than to the dramatist; it is all very wonderful, very picturesque, very decadent; from the vivid purple and saffron colours in the sky, to "the marvellous aerial stairway crowned with a loggia whence one can see the garden, the Brenta, and the distant country"; from an equally wonderful "atrium" to iron railings "like those which surround the tombs of the Scaliger at Verona" (as the marble circular stairway is like that of "the Venetian palace called 'del Bovolo' in the Court of the Contrarini"); from pilasters on which are fixed the great golden fans erected at the prows of galleys, to the garden itself, vast, pathwayed, showing now a mass of discoloured leaves, ruinous flowers, over-ripe fruit, "a garden leaning towards the waters of the Brenta with the abandon of a voluptuous and languid creature, lying by a mirror wherein she contemplates the last splendour of her decaying beauty!" Vast, moveless clouds, shining in amber and pale

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gold, are suspended in the north, some resting seemingly on the domed summits of the pines, some pierced by the shafts of sombre cypresses.

From the first moment the Dogaressa is repellent. She is infatuated with a lover far younger than herself, who, weary of her, is about to yield an open triumph to a dreaded rival, a beautiful courtesan of Venice.

It is needless to follow this play in detail. It is an hysterical screech throughout, alleviated by a few lovely images, pictorial "asides," passages of malign beauty. A sorceress arrives; the Dogaressa's women come back with maddening reports of what they have seen, of Panthea white and beautiful upon the *Bucentaur*, of her lover laughing at her feet, of the great festal procession of the barges and galleys; of the extraordinary love-chase of the nude Panthea by her baffled lover, in face of the multitude in the galleys. Then as night falls, and the incantations of the sorceress arise, a sudden conflagration startles all, and a tumult breaks out. Fierce strife has begun among rival factions at the water-festival, and, before long, the *Bucentaur* is suddenly in flames. The women in the

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garden hurry to and fro with torches, and two of them suddenly run forward, crying the wild tidings :

BARBARA. Panthea is in the flames !

ORDELLA. Panthea is in the flames !

[*The DOGARESSA bounds impetuously to her feet, and casts the mutilated waxen image from her and lets it fall, unheeded now, to the ground.*]

BARBARA [*hurrying breathlessly*]. Panthea burns ! The *Bucentaur* is on fire ! Swords flash everywhere !

ORDELLA [*half suffocated with anguish of fear*]. The *Bucentaur* is on fire, and the flames enwrap the courtesan and every one ! . . . It sails up the Brenta . . . it is close to us now !

BARBARA. A battle, *Serenissima*, a battle is being fought—all are mad with fury—every barge is attacked—blood runs—it is a carnage . . . They come nearer—here they come. Hark ! Hark !

[*The tumult grows, coming nearer and nearer : at the bottom of the garden the blood-red reflection of the burning Bucentaur flames through the dusk. Mad with grief and terror, the DOGARESSA throws herself towards the spiral stairway of the tower. The SORCERESS lifts the fallen, pin-pierced waxen image, and deposits it at the feet of the bronze Venus.*]

PENTELLA [*from the summit of the spiral marble staircase*]. The fire ! The fire ! It is beneath me ! It is the *Bucentaur*—with Panthea burned—covered with burning bodies. The battle rages still—swords flash—a myriad swords—fire and blood !

[*The DOGARESSA, unable to move, leans helplessly on the balustrade, mute, mad with grief and terror,*

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*while the garden is now aflame with the burning
Bucentaur and echoing with the savage cries of the
combatants : " Panthea !—Panthea !—Panthea !"*]

And so this orgy of blood, fire, and horror comes to an end. We have the dramatist's "direction" at the last that the livid and despairing face of the Dogaresa is lit as with "a bloody reverberation" of what is happening, "and expresses all the grandeur and all the beauty of the tragic scene." Alas, we cannot but think of her as a horrible and degraded madwoman; of the other personages as pantomimic maniacs; and of the whole play as—to repeat words just written—an orgy of blood, fire, and horror—an orgy of lust, superstition, and the putrescent splendour of an insane vision.

In these two short plays, then, as I have already said, we have Gabriele D'Annunzio at two extremes. His maturer work is neither so poignantly beautiful as the story of the Duchess Isabella, nor so luridly sensuous and offensive as that of the Dogaresa Gradeniga, but partakes of the dominant quality of each. There is evidence of a morbid, occasionally almost an insane imagination, in *La Città Morta* and *La Gioconda*, which reminds us of the

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author of *Il Sogno d'un Tramonto d'Autunno* ; but in *La Gioconda* there are passages and one or two scenes, and many pages and scene after scene in *The Dead City*, of a beauty so incomparable that we know no other could have written them but the author of *Il Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*.

La Gioconda is the only play by Gabriele D'Annunzio which has been performed in this country. But for the spell of the name of Eleanora Duse, but for her genius, it could hardly have won the startled attention of an English audience. The drama of art is the very last kind of dramatic art to appeal to the general public here. French wit and buffoonery, German domesticity and farce, these can be and are commonly welcome ; but the play which turns upon a complex problem of art has little chance of tolerance except from a few. It is easy to say, as most critics said and many visitors appear to have said, that Lucio Settala the sculptor is simply a libertine, with (some add) the special licence of the artistic temperament. There is no such licence ; and with too many people "the artistic temperament" is simply a euphemism for selfish weakness. On the other hand, the shape and colour, the growth, the idiosyncrasy,

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the need of the creative nature (a rare and peculiar thing, not for a moment to be confused with "the artistic temperament," which, as an American humorist says, is as common and disagreeable as measles), is generally neither understood nor sympathised with. *La Gioconda*, which phrase by phrase, page by page, moves in a procession of delicate words and lovely images, has, in Italy, been hailed by the best judges as one of the most beautiful and remarkable plays of the modern Italian drama. "Cosa bella mortal passa, e non d'arte"; and *La Gioconda* will be remembered when its detractors, who pronounced it morbidly full of horrors and mutilation, have long been silent.

I had meant to devote much space to *La Città Morta*, as the most beautiful of D'Annunzio's plays, but there is not now the same need for this since the recent publication of *The Dead City*, an admirable translation by Mr. Arthur Symons. There is nothing of Gabriele D'Annunzio's which has been more discussed than this remarkable play; it is at once the most perfect of his writings and that which has given the greatest cause of offence. To some it is one of the most essentially dramatic plays

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of our time; to others it is merely an unpleasant attempt along a line ventured upon by few modern dramatists since Shelley wrote *The Cenci*. It may be said at once that if one miss the central idea in *The Dead City* the play must seem little less than revolting; for we have here an instance of the overwhelming power of a supremely dramatic idea to transform what is ordinarily beyond the scope of art into what is convincingly a subject for art. If one can admit the spiritual or psychological power of evil of an abstract idea, then there is no difficulty in understanding the tragic circumstance upon which this drama turns.

In *The Revolt of Islam*, in Ford's well-known play, in one or two other dramas and romances, the illicit love of brother and sister has been the central motive. Perhaps the most potent reason for the common refusal to accept even these first-named writings as works of true art is not their subject so much as the lack of any sufficiently strong and convincingly fundamental idea to justify that choice in subject. This, at least, cannot be urged against *The Dead City*. The group of four people—it must be admitted, all “predisposed,” as Nordau would say—fulfil the drama of their strange,

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passionate, in a sense demented lives near and among the ruins of Mycenæ, where "Leonardo" is searching for the ages-long interred bodies of the Atridæ and Cassandra. That ancient terrible crime, whose tragic story in Greek drama is still the most appalling in art, throws its sinister light on all. As in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, so too in *La Città Morta* we feel that "Fate works her own dread work," that "there is no saviour from appointed woe," and that from overhead, from around, from beneath, "intolerable destiny" fulfils itself in terror and beauty—a beauty almost more unendurable than the sombre terror itself. No one of the four characters of the play knows what dreadful ill is being engendered in the crime-impregnated soil of the tombs of the Atridæ. All are caught in that evil, as strayed birds in a net.

Here is at once the strength and weakness of *La Città Morta*. It has a motive of supreme tragedy, it has the soul of a tragic and terrible idea. But, also, it has that fatal weakness in the treatment of "inevitable fate" which distinguishes the modern dramatist. This is a weakness we never find in Æschylus or Sophocles, whose men and woman do not relinquish all at the

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mere shadow of a passing fatality, but are, in the end, overcome by an inscrutable and irresistible Destiny, struggled against to the last for all its inscrutable resistlessness. We cannot but feel that the four persons in *The Dead City*, as so many of the persons in D'Annunzio's dramas and romances, are what they are, not because this is what they must be, but because this is what they have made themselves, or allow themselves to remain, or imagine themselves.

I need not here go into the details of the working out of the terrible tragedy of *La Città Morta*. Now that we have an English version so admirable as that of Arthur Symonds, *The Dead City* is attainable by any one who cares to read it. It has so much beauty that one can read and re-read with an instant pleasure ; but even this continual beauty is sometimes at the verge of sanity, as (when not over it) are the four persons who enact "this bitter theme." In its extraordinary subtlety, much of the play is purely literary, not dramatic, to make a present distinction. Even in "the other world" of romance men and women do not talk thus :

ALESSANDRO. I have met you in dreams as now I meet you in life. You belong to me as if

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you were my creation, formed of my hands, inspired by my breath. Your face is beautiful in me as a thought in me is beautiful. When your eyelids quiver it seems to me that they quiver like my blood, and that the shadow of your eyelashes touches the root of my heart.

* * * * *

BIANCA MARIA. You exalt with your breath the humblest of creatures. I have been only a good sister.

ALESSANDRO. . . . Wherever there was a trace of the great myths or a fragment of the imaginings of beauty with which the chosen race transfigures the force of the world, she passed with her reviving grace, passing lightly over the distance of centuries as if she followed the song of the nightingale across a country strewn with ruins.

The Dead City stands alone among recent dramatic literature for beauty of phrase and workmanship. On every page, almost, one may hold festival. But to say this is one thing: to say that it is also a great drama is another. For one, I consider it to be of the most memorable and significant dramas I have read, the most memorable perhaps, the most significant; but that, it may be, is because with some of us the power of the idea is greater than the power of all but the supreme expression of an idea. One obvious objection to *La Città Morta* is its extreme, its omnipresent, morbidity.

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Everybody is morbid ; the play is the last word of the decadent exalted in the pride of a decadence already moribund.

In *La Gloria*, as already hinted, we have at once the least known and the most ambitious of D'Annunzio's plays ; longer than *La Gioconda*, longer perhaps than *La Città Morta* even, it is much more involved than either—is, indeed, of so complex a nature that the foreign reader at least may well be uncertain as to his accurate interpretation of the author's meaning. Is *La Comnèna*, that mysterious woman whose malign genius and influence dominate this drama, more than a heroic figure, an Empress-Elect ? Is she indeed more than "*La Gloria*" ? The motto of the book, it is true, seems at once to suggest and to limit the interpretation, *La Gloria mi somiglia*. But it is possible—and on a first reading the present writer thus interpreted *Elena Comnèna*—that she stands for Rome itself : not the Rome of any one age or of all the ages, neither pagan nor Christian, nor mediæval nor modern Rome, but the very spirit of Rome itself, proud with an insane pride, and terrible and relentless in that pride, that insane obsession. Certainly this interpretation is at least permissible ; nor, if

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accepted, does it clash with that apparently indicated by the motto quoted above, "I am as Glory herself."

La Gloria is not only the most ambitious of D'Annunzio's plays, but is unquestionably remarkable. No doubt the author was inspired to write this play by his own comparatively recent identification with Italian Parliamentary life. Signor D'Annunzio entered Parliament with high but by no means chimerical ideals: from the first he seems to have been animated by an intense pride of and faith in his country, her past and her destinies, and, above all, by unbounded pride of and faith in Rome the eternal, the City of Cities, Mother of Nations. If there is one great Roman who more than any other was much in his mind when he was writing *La Gloria*, surely it was the famous tribune, Rienzi. Certainly Ruggero Flamma, in many respects, recalls that historic figure. It is difficult to discern wherein this play is actual and where symbolical. Elena Comnèna, Cesare Bronte, Ruggero Flamma—are they severally an ambitious Roman Cleopatra, a dying champion of the old order, the prophet and leader of a new dispensation: or is La Comnèna merely the embodied spirit of that malign

destiny of which we speak as Glory : is Cesare Bronte the impersonation of that which is for ever dying and passing, fighting desperately to the last against ideals and aims which, wolf-like, have turned to rend and destroy : is Ruggero Flamma no other than impetuous, divinely confident, superbly audacious Youth—that Youth which, as Ibsen tells us, is for ever knocking at our doors—itself so soon to be broken, ruined, and remorselessly trampled under the unseen feet of Change ?

It would be impracticable here to attempt anything like an adequate digest of *La Gloria*. Unlike *La Gioconda* or *La Città Morta*, even its fundamental plot cannot be told succinctly : it is at once as compact and multi-form as “La Folla” itself—*La Folla*, the Crowd, whose sea-like tumult, wrath, subsidence, whose impetuous and blind clamour, forever recurrent, give so overwhelmingly an effective background or undertone to this drama. One hears the significant voice of La Folla—with D'Annunzio this abstraction becomes a single living creature, ominous, irresponsible, unconstrained—from first to last : the play opens with its menacing laughter and closes with its savage, unreasoning yells for the

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martyrdom of its dethroned idol. In this connection one looks with singular interest to the publication of that drama to which I have already alluded, *La Folla*; for here, it may be, D'Annunzio will give us, through the alchemy of the imagination, a new transmutation from the abstract to the actual, a new but inverted transformation of Demos.

Briefly, *La Gloria* illustrates the rise and fall of Ruggero Flamma. Behind, through, and beyond his individual destiny is the more potent and mysterious destiny of Elena Comnèna, the wife of the dying Cesare Bronte—La Comnèna, that beautiful, scornful, imperious woman, citizen, and Empress the breath of whose will seems to have power to make not only the souls of men rise up and go down and pass away, but the destinies of nations also, the supreme destiny of Rome itself. The play opens with the coming of defeat to the partisans of the moribund Cesare Bronte, with the popular advent of Ruggero Flamma. All between this opening and the final scenes is concerned with the passionate effort of Flamma to reach his ends, to fulfil his ideals, with his immense triumph and inevitable disastrous collapse, with the

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bitter scorn, the bitter remorselessness, and the still more bitter love of Elena Comnèna, in whose fatal net Ruggero Flamma is entangled from the first, from which he never escapes, and, as one realises, never could escape. When, at the opening, the streets of Rome resound to the acclaim of those who hail Ruggero Flamma as Liberator-Elect, and unharness his horses and carry him past the house of his dying opponent, Cesare Bronte ; when Flamma himself harangues the surging multitude, eager to win over the still-loyal soldiery ; and when, above the part infuriated, part mocking and insolent crowd the face of the fascinating and hated woman whom they call La Comnèna looks out from a window—almost from that moment one hears the gathering of distant cries of hate, the savage turning of the imperiously led upon the fallen leader, the shouts of *Gettaci la sua testa ! Gettaci la sua testa !*—"Throw us his head ! Throw his head to us !"

That Elena Comnèna stands for more than an individual woman is early made evident by a passage in the first act, where one Fulvio asks, "To how many defunct kings, emperors, and princes did old Cesare ally himself in marrying La Comnèna ?"

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and the answer of one Fieschi, "To nineteen kings, ten emperors, seventy-seven sovereign princes, ninety 'protosebasti,' one hundred and fifteen 'curopalati,' and to all the rotten plutocracy of Byzanzia." She may be Byzance, she may be Rome ; but doubtless this imperial woman is one common to both and to many other dead cities and empires : *la Gloria mi somiglia*.

This remarkable drama is so different from anything else that D'Annunzio has done that we may well believe it stands for a great change that has come to him, to his art. What that change is, what its import is, we shall doubtless see in those as yet unpublished dramatic writings which Gabriele D'Annunzio has since written, or upon which, as is known, he is now engaged.

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(1902)

It has been the vogue for a considerable time to speak of contemporary Italian literature as a negligible quantity; as at best a beautiful garden, now untended and unkempt, where the few flowers are all but undiscoverable among the wilderness of weedy growths—a garden illumined, it may be, by the sunset radiance of Carducci, or by the summer-lightning of Gabriele D'Annunzio. Generalisations of the kind are notoriously misleading. Guy de Maupassant trenchantly alluded to them as the boomerangs of the would-be clever, that on occasion might hit their object, but were more likely to return upon the thrower. The other day we read in a foreign summary that since Walter Scott no novelist of note had appeared in our country, and that since Byron the British Muse had been silent. This statement is not further from the mark than that alluded to as common among us,

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nor than the rash assertion made a short time ago by one who ought to have known better, that there was not a latter-day poet, painter, or musician in Italy who stood above mediocrity—and this in the Italy of Carducci, of Segantini, of Verdi !

A juster note was struck a few years ago by one of the foremost French critics, the Vicomte Melchior de Vogüé, in whose now famous essay on the Latin Renaissance occur these significant words :

L'Italie est à cette heure le foyer d'une véritable renaissance de la poésie et du roman. L'esprit, qui souffle où il veut, rallume là des clartés évanouies sous d'autres cieux.

In the same year an Italian critic of repute, Alberto Manzi, thus hopefully concludes "a summary and outlook" :

Young, strong, feverishly studious and laborious, Italy is passing through a fertile period of preparation which will before long lead to a great and splendid display of her artistic, literary, and scientific vitality.

The truth must be sought somewhere between these optimistic declarations and the deep despondency of the late Ruggero Bonghi, who (writing, it must be remembered, some five or six years earlier, and at a time of

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exceptional national depression) expressed himself thus :

In the literary life of the nation there are signs of the same languor that paralyses its economical life. I see no sign of improvement. I should be very glad if there were a way out of so great a lethargy ; but I do not find it. I think that the chief cause is the lack of any strong moral movement ; there is nothing that agitates the public mind.

The phrase of Monsieur de Vogüé not only aroused European attention ; it was welcomed in Italy, and sank deep into the finer national consciousness. The distinguished French critic was accepted as a prophet. For Italy he foresees a worthy destiny. It is not, perhaps, the destiny dreamed of by those who carved the inchoate "geographical expression" into the solidarity of a united realm ; or of those who to-day would strain the national resources for the *Fata Morgana* of a militant world-Power ; but it is a destiny at once high and possible. It is not, says M. de Vogüé truly, to be achieved by war, and with great ships. It is not a destiny to be won by the sword, but by the pen ("avec quelques condottieri de la plume").

But what is of more immediate concern is that the Vicomte de Vogüé discerns

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clearly what the student of contemporary Italian literature must realise, if he is to form any just estimate, that there is in the Italian genius a conflict of two opposing influences, the one mystical, idealistic, austere, at times ascetic, the other sensual and pagan. Into this conflict of "les deux génies opposés, qui se disputèrent de tout temps l'âme italienne," has entered another element, the brooding spirit of the North. To the sadness and pessimism inherent in the Latin nature, along with the more obvious pagan delight in and absorbing preoccupation with life for life's sake, have come another sadness and another preoccupation. The *Melancholia* whom Dürer limned in symbol and De Quincey adumbrated in words, whom the musicians of the North breathed in strange airs and harmonies ; whom Schopenhauer has disclosed, and Ibsen served, and Nietzsche interpreted ; who has inspired the Slavonic mind from Tolstoi and Turgéniev to Dostoievski and Maxim Gorki—this new melancholy (coming to Italy ever with a Teutonic aspect and accent) has taken its place in the Italian soul to work for good or evil. We hear much of the pagan tendency of the Latin genius ; to-day the thought of Italy is more

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coloured with longing and bewilderment than with that hedonistic vision of life which is supposed to be the peculiar attribute of the peoples of the South. It is not D'Annunzio (as is so commonly assumed abroad) who is the true representative of the Italian mind, not even Carducci, the greatest of Italian poets since Leopardi. The true representatives are writers such as the northerners Antonio Fogazzaro, Arturo Graf, Ada Negri; as the southerners Mario Rapisardi, Giovanni Verga, Matilde Serao. In these the cry of revolt is against the conditions of life as incurred by human wrong and folly. In Carducci it is a vain cry of revolt against the inevitable change of ideals and circumstances, a cry of longing for the life that was, the beauty that has diminished; the cry that in his verse echoes in :

*L'ora presente è in vano, non fa che percuotere e
fugge :*

*Sol nel passato è il bello, sol ne la morte è il vero ; **

the cry that in his militant prose echoes in phrases such as this: "Poetry to-day is

* "The present hour is as naught; it is gone
even as it sounds :

In the past alone is Beauty; only in death
hides the True."

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useless from not having learned that it has nothing to do with the exigencies of the moment." It is, however, a vain cry only in so far as the concentration of spiritual or intellectual energy on an impossible recovery, or in futile lament, is a vain essay, however clothed in beauty; the cry is the wisdom of the seer and the prophetic voice of the poet when the things of the past, sought for in longing, are truly recoverable, or when the lament for what is gone is not a wailing over what has perished, but a summons to a living spirit to return. The strength and the weakness of Carducci stand revealed in the sane vision of the great poet, and in the wavering mirage of the lesser poet.

In D'Annunzio we hear another cry—the cry of revolt again, but of revolt against spiritual and intellectual *ennui* (as an imposed evil rather than as an incurred disease), of revolt against the wise tyranny of the actual, of revolt against that straight road of the commonweal, the *via media* which the wisdom of the ancients has projected far beyond us into the ages to follow; the cry of temperament, the cry of exacerbated nerves, the cry of the singer who thinks of the whole world as an air to be

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played delicately upon his flute, the cry of art withdrawn from the heart into the mind, the cry of egoism, of the supreme egotist.

It is because of this triple element in contemporary Italian literature—this mystical, idealistic, austere element, this sensual and pagan element, and this element of intellectual melancholy — “*cette vraie maladie septentrionale*,” as M. Bourget calls it—that we shall do better to seek the reflection in the writings of a few typical minds rather than in the “*imagine fluente*” presented by the ampler but confused mirror of the literature of the day and hour—a mirror in which we may discover tendencies and tide-reach and ebb-fall, but too vast and complex for any but the broadest synthesis of what it reveals. And as this article is to deal with the outstanding features of recent Italian poetry, and not with the complex physiognomy of fiction, the selection should comprise only the most significant figures—Carducci and Arturo Graf and D’Annunzio, Antonio Fogazzaro and Ada Negri and Giovanni Pascoli. Among the rest are many poets of fine achievement, one or two of rare excellence, whom to pass by here is not to ignore.

There has been a singular undulatory

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movement in Italian literature during the last quarter of a century. A wave of talent gathers from the still lagoons, but is barely discerned, at most has moved only a short way, before it lapses ; then again the listless waste ; then again a wave ; and so the melancholy rhythm alternates. But in each successive period the wave is wider, perhaps also deeper. If, in the intervals, the sad prophets have been wont to lament with Bonghi, the more hopeful have been too apt to hail the wave when it comes as no less than an upheaval of the Risorgimento. Both in some degree mislead ; but it is wiser to go a little astray with the eager than to stumble in the slough of despond. To-day three main factors act as deterrents on Italian literature : the absence of a united national ideal ; the continually more conspicuous recession of religious faith to a callous formalism ; and the profound discontent with existing conditions, political, social, economic, which finds vent in the steady growth of a crude Socialism, and, concurrently, in a gathering disbelief in the stability of the monarchical rock against the coming flood. It is to "Young Italy" that the nation looks above all for salutary inspiration.

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The high hopes, the passionate Risorgimento of the days of the Austrian struggle, of the Garibaldian liberation, of the Mazzinian gospel of emancipation, of the triumph of Rome, of the Unification, seem to have lapsed. Heavy taxation, the strain of supporting a great army and a powerful navy, the disastrous enterprise in Abyssinia, the futile dreams of colonial empire, the slow disintegration of monarchical influence, the growth of a hostile Socialism, the apparition of the anarchist, the bitter trade-rivalry with France, the tragic assassination of the devoted head of the State (son of the Liberator-King), the financial scandals in Rome, the labour risings from Milan to Palermo, the recurrent ferment in Sicily, the misery of Apulia and the Basilicata, the gradual depopulation of Calabria—all this, and more, has moved "immortal Italy" to its depths. It is a welcome augury that, in despite of all, the nation does not despair; that her statesmen hope; that her poets and dreamers proclaim a new day. "If only we could believe in the honesty and far-sightedness of those set above us, we would shape our destiny as our noblest and truest discern it"—that is what one hears everywhere, from Palermo to Venice, from Messina to Milan.

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Alas! that "prevalent political leprosy" on which the late Ruggero Bonghi so continually laid sad insistence is more than all else accountable. The Neapolitans have a saying—"Every one is unsettled when Vesuvius is restless"; and, unfortunately, there is a moral Vesuvius which keeps the intellectual activities of the nation in a feverish excitation when it is not in a torpor of hesitancy. Here we have the chief clue to that ominously frequent ebb and flow to which allusion has been made. The causes act so potently that the results immediately follow; for example, after 1887, a year of great despondency and disquietude, the publications of 1888 were fewer by some three hundred. No wonder that in this year Bonghi wrote: "In all that makes literature, my native country has certainly grown feeble and weary, and is growing more so every year." For the next year or two almost nothing of note appeared. A young poet, Mario di Siena, a youth of seventeen, on whom high hopes were set, proved to be but one of the innumerable *stelle cadenti*. Even that new meteor, D'Annunzio, showed himself at his weakest in *Giovanni Episcopo*.

In 1891 the slow wave began to lift

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again. Carducci published his noble and patriotic lyrical epic, *Piemonte*; and the marked success which met Signora Eugenia Levi's delightful anthology, *Dai Nostri Poeti Viventi*, showed that not only was Italy "a nest of singing-birds," but that a public far wider than had been foreseen waited ready to listen. Three well-known writers of charming verse added to their reputation by the publication, about this time, of collective editions—G. Mazzoni, Giovanni Marradi, and Aurelio Costanzo; and the "Carducci of the South," the Sicilian master-poet, Mario Rapisardi, made all the insurgent element of Italy re-echo with the fierce lyrical cries of his *Giustizia*, while at the same time he won the admiration of his critics by his more delicately wrought *Empedocle*. The brief wave culminated before the lapse of 1893 in the beautiful *Myricæ* of Giovanni Pascoli, one of the freshest, most winsome, and happiest of modern Italian books; in an "outburst" of the minor Sicilian poets, fired, perhaps, by Rapisardi's return to popularity—notably Eliodoro Lombardi, Ragusa Moleti, and Ugo Ojetti; in a new departure in sobriety and distinction on the part of D'Annunzio, with *Elegie Romane*; and, above all, in the

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appearance of that remarkable book, *Fatalità*, by Ada Negri, with its cry of the dumb and the poor, of the inarticulate suffering of labour, of the vaguely insurgent multitude, of the angry clang (to use the poet's own words) of the enchained masses striking into the silver flutes of those in high places.

Then again the ebbing wave. The monotonous months of the next year or two are relieved by only one newcomer of promise, Alfredo Baccelli, with *Vittime e Ribelli*.^{*} Even Carducci, Rapisardi, and D'Annunzio fail respectively in *Il Cadore*, *Atlantide*, and *Odi Navale*. The subsequent period would be a blank but for the modest appearance of three young writers of promise, the Sicilian Cesareo, the Roman Diego Angeli, the Lombard Antonio della Porta. It must be admitted that the outlook to-day is not more encouraging than it was a decade ago; perhaps less so since Carducci is now all but silent, and the mature writers of the younger group—with the exception of Giovanni Pascoli—reveal no advance upon

^{*} Signor Baccelli is now Under-Secretary of State, and, in his two spheres of influence, one of the outstanding personalities of the younger generation.

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what they had achieved before 1890. It has been pre-eminently the period of D'Annunzio and the "D'Annunzieggianti," though the fame of this writer is perhaps greater throughout the Continent than in the peninsula, where he is still looked upon somewhat askance, as a clever but audacious and refractory ward is looked upon by an anxious guardian. With justice, too, the Italians resent the frequent assertion abroad that Gabriele D'Annunzio stands alone as representative of the intellectual Italy of to-day, as with justice the Belgians resent the like common assertion in connection with Maurice Maeterlinck.

Within the last three or four years there have been signs of the returning tide. The low-water mark was probably touched in 1897-8, a period barren of any signal literary achievement. True, the much-discussed poetess, Ada Negri, published her fine volume of drab-coloured verse, *Tempeste*—a lyrical series which reveals, however, no advance upon *Fatalità*, while all that stood for weakness in that remarkable first book by an Italian woman in humble life is notably emphasised. It would be unfair to say that this slack period was absolutely barren, for both in the verse and

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prose which deserved critical attention were one or two instances of fine work accomplished, and at least two or three of promise. But, as an able critic (Vicenzo Morello, in his *Nell' Arte e Nella Vita*) has said,

These fragile blossoms of song appear one day and disappear the next in that blighting wind of indifference which has so long prevailed from the Alps of the north to the shores of Etna.

Nevertheless, there is evident an awakening of public interest in national literature, probably in some degree because of the "commemorations" celebrated at the close of the century, with their stirring historical reminiscences and inspiring literary associations—Amerigo Vespucci, Paolo Toscanelli, Savonarola, Leopardi, Bernini, and others. From the standpoint of letters the period is notable for the immense stride in Italian and European reputation made by one writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio. In one year, in the twelvemonth comprising the otherwise somewhat barren period 1898-9, this writer's amazing output included the three long dramas published in book form, *La Città Morta*, *La Gioconda*, and *La Gloria*, and the two shorter dramas separately issued as the *Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera* and the *Sogno d'un Tramonto*

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d'Autunno.* *La Gioconda* and *La Città Morta* have been read and discussed throughout Europe ; and the former has been acted in London and Paris as well as in the chief Italian cities. *La Gloria*, D'Annunzio's most ambitious dramatic attempt, was unsuccessful on the stage ; and, though some of the leading Italian critics spoke of this strange, not to say somewhat enigmatic, play with high praise, their appreciation was never endorsed by that of the public. Already known as a poet and novelist, D'Annunzio had now challenged criticism as a dramatist. But while radical differences of opinion obtain as to the significance and value of his achievement in this direction, there can surely be little question as to the wealth of imaginative energy and the continual miracle of art poured forth in these dramas, most notably perhaps in that sombre and terrible play of the buried city, which (with one or two exceptions) has been so inadequately considered by English critics ; or in *La Gioconda*, of which an eminent Italian critic, Guido

* The first and third of a dramatic quartet called *I Sogni delle Stagioni* (*Dreams of the Four Seasons*), of which the *Sogno d'un Meriggio d'Estate* and *Sogno d'una Notte d'Inverno* are as yet unpublished.

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Biagi, has aptly said: "In any case *La Gioconda* has brought into the theatre a breath of fresh and fragrant poetry, which might have come from the blossoming gardens of the Renaissance"; or in that masterpiece of poignant beauty, the *Dream of a Spring Morning*, where, in combined loveliness and terror, we find something akin to the Elizabethan magic that we prize so highly in Webster, in Ford, in Beaumont and Fletcher.

We cannot in this article further discuss D'Annunzio's achievement in imaginative drama, nor his work in this respect as compared with that of Arrigo Boito, Felice Cavallotti, Severino Ferrari, Cossa, and above all Giuseppe Giacosa. But the drift of the most authoritative opinion, foreign and native, is that D'Annunzio has revealed no compelling genius, perhaps not even a genuine talent, for the drama, except as a form of literary expression. All the faults and shortcomings of this perplexing writer are of a nature to render nugatory his ambition to become "the Wagner of the drama." His latest effort, *Francesca da Rimini*, has failed on the stage; the radical shortcomings of this poetical drama as an acting play, despite its beauty and charm

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and above all its vividness, make it difficult to believe that it can appeal to any but a strictly literary public.

The close of the nineteenth and the dawn of the twentieth century were not wholly engrossed by "the Deputy for Beauty"—to adopt M. de Vogüé's phrase—and the D'Annunzieggianti,* though his fame was enhanced by the *furore* which followed the publication of *Il Fuoco*, and the announcement of the long-expected volume of mature verse, *Laudi del Cielo, del Mare, della Terra, e degli Eroi*, and of the forthcoming *Francesca da Rimini*, and the public readings and actual publication of the first instalment of the lyrical epic, *La Canzone di Garibaldi*. An important new book (besides a volume of notable essays and addresses) by Antonio Fogazzaro; Giovanni Pascoli's second collection of lovely verse, *Myricæ*, hailed with delight throughout Italy; † Vittoria Aganoor's

* Notably D. Tumiati, Antonio della Porta, Angelo Orvieto, Diego Angeli, Angelo Conti.

† The author is sometimes lovingly called "Il Virgilio di nostro tempo," and his idyllic muse and home-note justify the application. To many of his compatriots, moreover, his appeal is the greater because his muse never wanders from familiar ground. No more significant lines of

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Leggenda Eterna ; the exquisitely chiselled *Primavera Fiorentina* of Severino Ferrari (of some of whose earlier work Carducci wrote : " If Petrarch were among us to-day he would be proud of this ") ; Arrigo Boito's much-discussed *Nerone* ; Arturo Graf's *Morgana* ; the brilliant colloquial sonnet-sequence of Cesare Pascarella ; the new edition of the *Musica antica per Chitarra* of Domenico Tumiati, foremost of the " Symbolists " ; the just published *Verso l'Oriente* of Angelo Orvieto, the young author of *Sposa Mistica*—these, and others whom it would be wearisome to enumerate, suffice to show both the vitality and variety of the new " Risorgimento." Perhaps the most significant indication of an Italian public really interested in imaginative literature is the publication, in a single volume at a moderate price, of all the poetry of Carducci in a " popular edition " ; and in the fact that this (for an Italian publisher) daring venture has achieved a wide success. But the true hope is here—that all Young Italy reproves despondency, and looks his, indeed, could be quoted than those which end the last poem in *Myrica* :

*Io ne seguirà il vano sussurrare
Sempre lo stesso, sempre pui lontano.*

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forward with courage and determination. It believes in itself, in its national vocation, in the national destiny; it maintains the survival, within itself, of the ancient spirit of the ancient genius. "It sleeps, that antique spirit," wrote Carducci many years ago, "it sleeps, but is not dead; and, as a sleeper wakes, so shall it wake, and to a new day."

When, some pages back, we spoke of the three chief deterrent influences working on the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation, we might have added that in yet another vital respect the writers of Italy are seriously affected. In no other European country, with the possible exception of Spain, is there so marked a divergence between the language of letters and the language of common use, between literary and colloquial speech. The "reading public" in Italy is amazingly small in relation to the population, if we compare it with that of France, Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, Great Britain. But the ordinary speech of this relatively small reading public is quite as amazingly distinct from literary diction as is, say, the vernacular of London or New York from the ornate periods of Johnson, Gibbon, or Macaulay, and has

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not even the vital connection which, in these cases, underlies the obvious divergence. No wonder that Carducci, the most polished living master of Italian, is all but incomprehensible to many of his intelligent compatriots, who find even Antonio Fogazzaro and Emilio De Marchi, Giovanni Verga, and Matilde Serao (the most vernacular of the eminent writers of the day) using a diction which in private life would seem alien, if not wholly artificial. For Italy is above all others the country of dialectical speech. That this barrier is being overcome, and that the directed efforts of the ablest writers and educationalists concur with the slow but steady improvement of the mental training of the masses (*i.e.*, of all classes, from the professional to the poorest, even in densely ignorant Calabria and remote Sicily), affords promise that a truly great national literature will in due time arise in Italy. Fortunately there has always been the connecting bridge of "popular literature"—*i.e.*, the colloquial and dialectical local poetry in which Italy has ever been, and still is, so fortunately rich.

Like so many others of his countrymen now writing circumspectly of the problems, the developments, and the collective movement of Italian literature, the late Ruggero

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Bonghi (whom we specify as a representative critic) did not realise that the so-called "pagan" or "barbaric" movement headed by Carducci was, and is, one of those inevitable life-seeking movements which periodically occur in every literature, when old ways have become outworn; or, again, that a regenerative movement of the kind may have to turn backward in order to rediscover the forward way. A large part, possibly the greater and the more vital part, of contemporary Italian literature turns thus upon an apparently retrograde way, turns upon what is called the classical revival. The famous veteran at Bologna is its accepted leader. But neither Carducci nor his adherents (who now comprise nearly all the younger writers of note) attempt a revival of the kind so often imputed. It is not mere imitation of the past that is the end in view, but, through a following of the same avenues of art as those in which the great poets of old reached their goal, to reach in turn the same or a still higher goal. To this end it was necessary to break away from the conventions which had so hampered, not to say devitalised, modern Italian literature. It was not thought or inspiration only that had to have new wings, not

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poetry only, but metre itself had to shed its old chrysalis and break into a new life.

In every new intellectual movement the feature of exaggeration is inevitable ; without exaggeration no new energy is likely to force its way. It was long, and to some extent still is, the wont in Italy to impute to Carducci an almost perverse exaggeration, not only as to his intellectual standpoint (that of a modern man consistently looking backward), or as to his lifelong effort to recreate in the Italian vernacular of to-day the dignity and beauty of the vernacular of Horace and Catullus, but as to wilful obscurity in point of metrical diction. The obscurity of Carducci is not that of congested thought and crowded images, as in Browning ; nor that of the dazzle of continual by-play, as in George Meredith ; nor that of careful and calculated occultism, as in Mallarmé. It is rather the "obscurity" of extreme light, such as that which the earliest critics of Leconte de Lisle, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Baudelaire and Hérédia, found in the classically pure diction of those writers. Carducci has little in common with writers like Mallarmé, with whom he is often ignorantly compared. He is rather the Italian

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confrère of Leconte de Lisle, of José Maria Hérédia, but is more "human," more of his day and hour, than the supreme French classicist in verse, and has a spiritual earnestness alien to the cold beauty of M. Hérédia's "perfected ivory." At the same time it cannot be denied that both in remote allusion and in calculated Latinity of diction he is occasionally pedantic; and it would be easy to cull from his writings lines and even quatrains or passages which would justify the complaint frequently heard in Italy that "Carducci is difficult, often even unintelligible." Then, too, his Italian is so far from colloquial that even when clear to a compatriot it is difficult to render adequately in English, for sometimes the difference is a constitutional difference of racial genius as well as of speech, as, to choose at random an instance, the final quatrain of the lovely poem, *Su Monte Mario* :

*Su le rovine de la basilica
Di Zeno al sole sibili il colubro,
Ancor canterai nel deserto
I tedi insonni de l'infinito.*

But these occasional defects are mere specks on the polished mirror of Carducci's poetry, at once so beautiful, so distinguished, so antique, so modern, the only poetry of

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to-day which can be compared with that of Leconte de Lisle and Alfred de Vigny, with that of the poet's greater predecessors, above all with that of his chosen master, Catullus. Every great poet is in a sense a metrical inventor : and with the exception of Mr. Swinburne there is no living master of metre, particularly of classical metres, comparable with Giosuè Carducci. In a word, it is not by their exaggerations we are to judge Carducci and the writers who follow his lead, or the intellectual fellowships typified by Antonio Fagazzaro, Arturo Graf, Ada Negri, Giovanni Pascoli, or Gabriele D'Annunzio and the D'Annunzieggianti. All these have to be judged by their range of thought, the object of their aim, and their actual achievement.

The student of Italian literature, therefore, will do well to put aside as irrelevant nearly all that he reads or hears as to the "pseudo-classicism" of Carducci and the rest who participate in that vital movement at the head of which he stands. For it is a movement of life, not of an artificially stimulated erudition ; a movement of fresh energy, not a spurred effort. It is in truth part of a "movement," of an uplifted life that is not confined to this or that leader

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and his following, nor to Italy, nor even to the Latin countries, but is coextensive with the human mind.

Already, we perceive, it is a long way from the conditions indicated by Lamartine in a once notorious passage of the *Pèlerinage d'Harold*, where Italy is alluded to as

Poussière du passé, qu'un vent stérile agite,

a phrase which, with the added "Je vais chercher ailleurs . . . des hommes et non pas de la poussière humaine," brought the French poet a "cartel" from an indignant Italian patriot, the once celebrated General Pepe.

In a broad classification, then, as already indicated, Antonio Fogazzaro and Arturo Graf stand for the North, Giosuè Carducci and Giovanni Pascoli for the Centre (and this not only in the geographical sense), and Gabriele D'Annunzio for the South, as well as for that neo-paganism, neo-Hellenism, and very modern (and, we may add, world-old) hedonism which too often is the dignified verbal raiment of a very unworthy thing, generally more crudely designated.

Although Fogazzaro and Graf are the most distinctive of the Northerners, they differ materially. The elder and more famous is the François Millet of Italian

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literature, but a Millet of a far wider intellectual and æsthetic range than the great Frenchman. The pathos and dignity of suffering, of sorrow, of the heavy burden bravely borne; the nobility of faith and courage; the beauty of simplicity in life and art; the charm of tenderness and the sustaining power of love—these are the sources of this writer's genius, both in prose and verse. But, pure as is his Italian, virile and idiomatic, the colour of his mind is distinctively Northern, Teutonic. So might a Scandinavian, an Englishman, a German, write, were he equally gifted, and were he an adopted Italian, settled in that Northern Alpine region of the lakes, so well loved, sung, and praised by Fogazzaro. That gentle but all-pervading melancholy of his, too—so different from the disdainful stoicism of Carducci, the baffled despair of writers such as Ada Negri, the life-weariness of Graf, the *ennui* of D'Annunzio, the hard pessimism of Rapisardi and Verga—is likewise Northern. But it would be a mistake to think of Fogazzaro as a sentimentalist, notwithstanding the sentimentality of some of his work. He stands for what is finest in the Italian nature; and the love and reverence in which he is

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held afford the best proof of his high significance in contemporary literature. "Valsolda" (in whose beautiful valley he has passed the better part of his life) has become a signal word in Italy, for it is now identified with some of the loveliest verse and much of the noblest prose of the day—is, indeed, associated with a noble personal ideal, the ideal of a simple, strong, much-suffering, yet ever brave and serene life. "Our Walter Scott," Giacosa has called Antonio Fogazzaro.

But he, too, like Arturo Graf—though not as a fascinated victim, rather as one greatly dreading yet sustained by faith—has looked at times overfearfully in the face of that new tragic Muse of the modern world, "Madre Dolorosa." In his remarkable study on *Sadness in Art*,* Fogazzaro writes:

Senza tenerezza, senza fiamma . . . la potenza sua fascinatrice è nella grandiosità del suo dolore stesso, è l'idea pura, fatta marmo, dell' universale dolore, del dolore che oscura presto o tardi ogni vita umana.

The words have the colour of Fogazzaro's mind, and show, as a tinted map, the colour of a vast region in the Italian thought of to-day. In the same essay he speaks of

* *Il Dolore nell' Arte*. (Milan, 1901.)

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“la innocenza magnifica della natura”; but he and those of his spiritual fellowship trust little to this “magnificent innocence,” and for the most part look habitually into life, not only as in a glass darkly, but as into a dark pool, heavy with the shadow of ancient sorrow and obscure menace. True, Fogazzaro is not a pessimist; he has not the steel-bound gloom of Graf, whose impeccable verse is forged rather than moulded. But in his poems and novels, notably in *Il Mistero del Poeta*, and in the excellent monograph on his life-work by Sebastiano Rumor,* and, above all, in his always intimate and profoundly sincere “addresses”—as, for example, when he spoke in Rome in 1893 on *The Origin of Man and the Religious Sentiment*, or, recently, at the Collegio Romano, on *I Misteri dello Spirito Umano*—a deep and native melancholy pervades even the most ardent words of faith and hope, and underlies all but the sunniest and most debonair of his poems. Nevertheless, his influence is wholly for good—the foremost moral influence now moulding Young Italy. Seldom is the bio-

* *A. Fogazzaro. La Sua Vita, le Sue Opere, i Suoi Critici.* By Sebastiano Rumor. (Milan, 1896.)

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grapher more literally truthful than Sebastian Rumor in writing, "In tutta Italia il nome di Antonio Fogazzaro, poeta e romanziere, è riverito ed amato."

Though all the poetry of Fogazzaro is worth familiarity (particularly for those who feel the underlying charm of his prose romances), the foreign reader may be content with the *Selected Poems*, published in Milan in 1898; the more so as it is not in the longer poetical compositions, such as the versified novel, *Miranda*, but in the shorter poems, that he is to be found at his best. One of these, a poem representative of the author's mastery over the cadence of simple Italian prosody, may fitly be quoted here :

LA SERA

(LE CAMPANE DI OIRA)

*Ad occidente il ciel si discolora,
Vien l' ora—de le tenebre.
Da gli spiriti mali,
Signor, guarda i mortali !
Oriamo.*

(LE CAMPANE DI OSTENO)

*Pur noi su l' onde
Moviam da queste solitarie sponde
Voci profonde.
Da gli spiriti mali,
Signor, guarda i mortali !
Oriamo.*

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(LE CAMPANE DI FURIA)

*Pur noi remote, ad alte
Fra le buie montagne
Odi, Signore.
Da gli spiriti mali
Guarda i mortali !
Oriamo.*

(ECHI DELLE VALLI)

Oriamo.

(TUTTE LE CAMPANE)

*Il lume nasce e muore ;
Che riman dei tramonti e delle aurore ?
Tutto, Signore,
Tranne l' Eterno, al mondo
È vano.*

(ECHI DELLE VALLI)

È vano.

(TUTTE LE CAMPANE)

*Oriamo, oriamo in pianto,
Da l' alto e dal profondo,
Pei morti e pei viventi,
Per tanta colpa occulta e dolor
Pietà Signore !
Tutto il dolore
Che non ti prega,
Tutto l' errore
Che ti diniega,
Tutto l' amore
Che a te non piega,
Perdona, O Santo.*

(ECHI DELLE VALLI)

O Santo.

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(TUTTE LE CAMPANE)

*Oriam per i dormienti
Del cimitero
Che dicon rei, che dicono innocenti,
E tu, Mistero,
Solo tu sai.*

(ECHI DELLE VALLI)

Solo tu sai.

(TUTTE LE CAMPANE)

*Oriam per il profondo
Soffrir del mondo
Che tutto vive e sente.
Ama, dolora,
Giudizio arcano de l' Omnipotente.
Sia pace al monte a l' onda.
Al bronzo ancora
Sia pace.*

(ECHI DELLE VALLI)

*Pace.**

* Evening. (The Bells of Oria)—In the west the heavens redden ; the gloaming is come. From all evil spirits, Lord, guard Thy children. Let us pray ! (The Bells of Osteno)—We also, by the waters [beneath these lonely hill-sides], lift out voices from the depths. From all evil spirits, Lord, guard thy children. Let us pray ! (The Bells of Furia)—We, too, remote and lone among the shadowy hills, cry to Thee, Lord ! From all evil spirits guard Thy children. Let us pray ! (Echoes from the Valleys)—Let us pray ! (All the Bells)—The light is born, and dies ; what remains of sunsets or dawns ? All, Lord, all of this world, all save the eternal, is vain. (Echoes from the

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There is perhaps no stranger apparition in contemporary Italian literature than Arturo Graf. Called the *Hérédia* of Italy, because of the classic ideal and impeccable form of his verse, he is the son of an Italian mother by a German father. He was born at Athens, nurtured in Greece—that Greece whose art he has mastered, but whose temperament he has not inherited, having been endowed instead with the world-sadness of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche—and transplanted while still young to Roumania, whence in early manhood he came to

Valleys)—Is vain ! (All the Bells)—Let us pray, let us pray, from mountain-height and shadowy vale, for the living and for the dead, for all secret wrong and evil, have pity, Lord ! All sorrow that doth not come to Thee in prayer, all bitterness that denieth Thee, all love that doth not seek Thee, have pity upon it, O Holy Spirit ! (Echoes from the Valleys)—O Holy Spirit ! (All the Bells)—Let us pray for those sleeping the long sleep of the grave ; for those who are accounted sinners, and for those accounted without sin ! For Thou alone, Mysterious Spirit, Thou only knowest all. (Echoes from the Valleys)—Thou only knowest all. (All the Bells)—Let us pray for all the sorrow and suffering of the world, which lives in grief and pain. Love, sorrow . . . hidden wisdom of the All-Wise. Let there be peace upon the hill-side, by the waters ! On the holy bells, themselves, peace ! (Echo from the Valleys)—Peace !

Milan. In the intensity of his irremediable pessimism he can be compared with no French poet save the anonymous author of the *Chants de Maldoror*, with no English poet save James Thomson of *The City of Dreadful Night*; and nothing in the fantastically sombre verse of Nietzsche suggests the same profound depths of gloom. But Graf's terrible sadness, his almost elemental melancholy, has never the suggestion of anything ignoble, as in *Maldoror* or Baudelaire; it is never the mere rhetoric of spiritual collapse and despair, as sometimes in James Thomson; nor is it the outcome of intellectual fever, or of the tortured nerves, or of a powerful mind habitually apt to lose its equilibrium, as with the author of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He gathers up all the hopelessness of Italy, of the world, of the human soul; moulds it in tears and longing, and the unutterable sadness of sorrow without hope; and reveals it to us in lovely image after image, in chiselled verse of perfect form, in a beauty rendered almost unnaturally poignant. In a far deeper sense than the somewhat blatant *Lucifer* of Mario Rapisardi, than the magnificently rhetorical *Hymn to Satan* of Carducci, Graf's *Buried Titan* (in the very remarkable poem

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La Città dei Titani in the volume called *Le Danaïdi*) may be said to symbolise the bewildered attitude of the modern mind. So absolutely does he differ from the Latin temperament that he remains cold even before the inspiration of woman. Neither the beautiful actuality nor the seductive visionary type moves this modern St. Anthony. In all his writings we remember no verse in the slightest degree recalling these eminently Carduccian lines (from *Ruit Hora*, perhaps the loveliest poem in the first *Odi Barbare*):

*Fra le tue nere chiome, o bianca Lidia,
Langua una rosa pallida ;
E una dolce a me in cuor tristezza subita
Tempra d' amor gl' incendii.**

Nor has he ever any such cry to the lesser destinies as :

*O desiata verde solitudine
Lungi al rumor de gli uomini !
Qui due con noi divini amici vengono
Vino ed amore, O Lidia.†*

* "In thy dark hair, O white Lidia, a pale rose languishes ; in my heart suddenly a sweet sadness softens the flame of love."

† "O longed-for green solitude, far from the rumour of men ; hither have come with us our two divine friends, Wine and Love, O Lidia."

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If once or twice we think we hear the cry
of passion, it is only that of disillusion or
brooding incertitude.

*O woman, the darkness in thine eyes is the darkness
of night ;
Thy soul, too, is obscure and mysterious as the sea,
as this obscure sea
Which engulfs in its flowing side the plunging
prow.
I see thy dark hair ; in thy pale, beautiful
face
I see the wandering fires of thine eyes ; I see thy
laughter-parted rosy lips ;
But into thy soul, into that darkness, no, I do not
see.*

And yet this is the poet who, in his
beautiful reminiscences (*Dal Libro dei
Ricordi*), writes thus of his dear home
at the foot of the slope where the
Parthenon rears its sacred outline ("la
dolce casa . . . sulla cui cima altero il
Partenon drizza la sacra mole") :

*Avea presso un giardin, triste e severo,
Benchè di rose pieno e di viole,
E un gran cipresso, avvilluppato e nero,
Aduggiava di fredda ombra le ajuole.*

*V' era, pien d'acqua, e di figure adorno,
Un sarcofago antico, alla cui sponda
Veniamo a ber le rondini dal cielo.*

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*Alto silenzio tenea l' aria intorno,
E nella pace estatica e profonda
Non si vedea crollar foglia nè stelo.**

Truly, as has been said of him, Arturo Graf may see as a Hellene, and write in Italian, his maternal tongue, but it is the sad Northern soul, "l'anima tedesca," which speaks in his poetry. In *Idea Fissa*, one of the most notable poems in his first book, *Dopo il Tramonto (After Sundown)*, he reveals, consciously or unconsciously, the overwhelming prepossession of a single idea which all his life has bewitched his imagination and entranced his mind. His Muse, in a word, is Death, whether he call her "Morte Regina," or "Morte Guerriera," or "Regina del Mondo," or veils his sombre passion under an antique name, as in that strange and terrible second book, *Medusa* :

* "Near by was a garden, somewhat sad and austere, for all that it was full of roses and violets ; perhaps because of the great cypress, a pyramid of green darkness, which cast its chill shadow athwart the garden-ways.

"There, too, with carven figures and full of water, stood an antique sarcophagus, where the swallows loved to dip and drink.

"A deep stillness brooded around, rose into the silent air : the peace was a husht ecstasy, wherein no stem moved, no leaf quivered."

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*O mia lugubre Musa
Implacabile Erinni,
Tu dal mio labbro fai proromper gl' inni
Venenati, O Medusa ! **

There is, however, more variety, along with still more evident beauty and mastery, in Graf's third book, *Le Danaïdi*, published in 1897. A few months ago appeared his *Morgana*, in which, though there is no poem to compare with *Città dei Titani* of the *Danaïdi* volume, nor any sequence to parallel the Athenian *Libro dei Ricordi* in *Dopo il Tramonto*, a more serene spirit, somewhat of a wise hedonism, is revealed. We even encounter lines such as :

*. . . nell' aria chiara
Cantano i mandolini—
I mandolini arguti
Dalle voci tremanti,
Onde perdon lor vanti
Arpe, flauti, liuti.
Cantano, Gioja, amore !*

which surprise one almost as though one were to come upon an ode of Anacreon in the text of Ecclesiastes ! Nevertheless, *Ruit Hora* might be the apt title of the

* "O sombre and dread Muse, implacable Erinnyes, thou makest these lips sing poisoned hymns, O Medusa ! "

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book, and its motto the couplet to which so much music and thought and longing are attuned :

*Mio vecchio core, mio povero core,
Perchè se' tu così triste e inquieto ;*

or that undernote that is never lost :

*Passato è 'l tempo de' teneri inganni,
Passato è l' ora propizia all' amore.*

The book closes with a short poem, *Explicit*, which might well stand as epilogue to all its sad beauty—a sadness not wholly in vain, for it is the sadness of a fine and noble spirit, and as such is accepted in Italy, and so is become in a sense representative :

EXPLICIT

*Non uno de' ben vani, in ch' io già confidai,
Mi tenne fede mai :
Ciò mi riempie il core, che a soffrir mal s' avvezza,
D' una grande amarezza.*

*Non una delle colpe, ch' io commisi in mia vita,
È rimasta impunita :
Ciò mi riempie il core (povera, nuda stanza !)
D' una grande speranza.**

* “ Not one good thing, now lost, in which once I put all my trust, has ever remained with me ; and this has filled my heart, even now so ill-accustomed to suffer, with a great bitterness.

“ Not one of all the faults I have committed

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There is an even greater difference between the pessimism of Ada Negri, whose *Fatalità* has had in Italy a wider acceptance than almost any other recent book of verse, and that of Arturo Graf, than between Graf's and Leopardi's. Leopardi was the exponent of the malady of his age : Graf is the poet of the soul's secret dread and despair : Ada Negri is of the many whose strength lies in wild protest, fierce denunciation, in scorn and reproach, and the voice of social misery. Her poetry has the swift movement and lyrical vehemence of the early revolutionary poems of Swinburne, or of Victor Hugo's *Les Châtiments*, but it has also the faults of these, and that in an exaggerated degree. An instance from the same poem (*Sfida—Defiance, or Challenge*) will suffice. We sympathise when she cries :

*E sei tu dunque, tu, mondo bugiardo,
Che vuoi celarmi il sol de gl' ideali ; **

but we only smile at the rhetoric of :

*O grasso mondo d' oche e di serpenti,
Mondo vigliacco che tu sia dannato ;*

in my life but has had to pay its penalty : and this has filled my heart (poor, bare habitation) with a great hope."

* "It is you, then, lying world, who conceal from me the fair heaven of the ideal."

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*Fisso lo sguardo ne gli astri fulgenti
Io movo incontro al fato.**

Many of us have been Ada Negris in our day. As we grow older we not only do not call our fellows geese and serpents, but even settle down to tolerate them with kindly complacency. Miss Ada Negri herself, revolutionist, socialist, *intransigente*, is now the Signora Garlanda, the wife of a wealthy Milanese *bourgeois*.

Nevertheless, there is in her work a power to influence. Its secret may be discerned in the poem in *Fatalità* called *Senza Nome* (*Nameless*), wherein she speaks of herself as an enigma of hate and love, of violence and gentleness ("un enigma son io d'odio e d'amore, di forza e di dolcezza"), and says that throughout her life "an evil spirit has followed me step by step, and an angel with hands clasped in prayer" ("seguono i passi miei maligno un nano e un angelo pregante"). It is the combination in her of class-hatred and feminine unselfishness which have won her so many friends; and the secret of her influence

* "O world, swarming with geese and serpents, wretched world, may damnation be your lot. With my gaze fixed on the shining stars, I move onward to my destiny."

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is, on the one side, the frank recognition of the power of absorbing love to ennoble circumstance, as in that passionate and vivid poem, *Popolana* (*A Girl of the People*), and, on the other, her grandiose vision of the congregated sorrows and sufferings of the world, as in the burning lines of the unforgettable *I Vinti* (*The Vanquished*)—"Behold them, in hundreds, in thousands, in millions, in countless hordes; from their serried ranks rises a rumour as of distant thunder. . . . Alas, alas, we are the vanquished!"—and in her poignant sense of spiritual retribution, as in *I Grandi* (*The Great Ones of the Earth*):

. . . *Ma piango il sangue del mio cor sui Grandi*
De la tenebra.—Sono
Gli Affamati, gli Oppressi, i Venerandi,
*Che tregua nè perdono.**

To turn from this tempestuous emotion and troubled art to the serene air of Carducci—though he too is the poet of revolt—or to the languorous beauty of D'Annunzio's verse, or to the exquisite art and natural

* "From my heart I weep tears of blood for those who were once Great Ones of the earth: now, in the Other-world, they are the Starving, the Oppressed, the Aged and Stricken, knowing neither truce nor mercy."

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charm of Pascoli, is to exchange the noise and sordidness of a manufacturing town for the intellectual peace of a library, or the charmed stillness of a cloister, or the gladness of a spring day in the open. Books such as Giovanni Pascoli's *Myrica* and the maturer and finer *Poemetti* bring into Italian literature to-day something of what Wordsworth, Keats, and Tennyson, in a fresh, vivid naturalism, brought into English poetry. So now we come to the two most eminent names in Italy to-day—to the old king and the insurgent prince, Giosuè Carducci and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

It is now nearly thirty years since the *Hymn to Satan*—that modern "classic" of spiritual and intellectual revolt—electrified Italy. To-day it will be read without the same answering thrill, perhaps even with lessened admiration. Rhetoric has not the staying-power of the grave ecstasy that is perfected art; and this, perhaps the most famous lyrical poem of the last half-century, is largely superb rhetoric. Nevertheless, the fragrance and the bloom are still upon that unique flower, grown in the troubled solitudes of spiritual desire. Nor, to vary the metaphor, have the echoes yet died away, in any country, of that clanging

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tocsin, that war-song of the pagan spirit. If, nowadays, no one even in Italy anathematises Carducci as a worshipper of evil because of his *Inno a Satana*, there are few probably, in Italy or elsewhere, who would not now regard the Satanic epithets and allusions as somewhat pantomimic and grotesque. For, of course, Carducci does not mean, never did mean, to invoke the Prince of Evil! All that the celebrated (and technically marvellous) *Hymn* means is, Let us be done with what is outworn; let us worship only what makes for divinity; let us rejoice in our mortal destiny, and in our world, and not cry shame upon our humanity; let us be done with shams; let us be up and rejoice; let us be up and doing. It is but the principle of rebirth, of revolt, the law of material, as of spiritual, resurrection which the poet invokes in his *Satan*:

*Salute, O Satana,
O ribellione,
O forza vindice
Della ragione!*

And it is not to the conventional "Prince of this World," but to no other than Alastor, the Spirit of Beauty, which every poet has worshipped since poetry became the dream

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of the human soul, that he cries : "For thee Adonis lived ; for thee Astarte ; for thee came into being the marbles, the pictures, and golden verse, when, from the Ionian wave, Aphrodite arose with her great joy ; for thee roared the forests of Lebanon . . . for thee sang the chorus . . . for thee raved the dances."

The rhetorical fires have long ere this expended their inflammatory force : the beauty remains. It is to be hoped that the day will not come when the youth of Italy will no more be stirred by the magic of the lines of the famous *Hymn* :

*Tra le odorifere
Palme d'Idume,
Dove biancheggiano
Le ciprie spume.**

If the *Inno a Satana* be so characteristic of Carducci, not less characteristic of his mental attitude, of the ethical aspect of his splendid achievement, are those other words of his—"Send forth upon the wind the cry of the watchman : 'The age renews itself, the day of fulfilment is nigh.'"

In this sense the *Hymn* is typical of Carducci's poetry ; for here again, we may

* "'Neath the odoriferous Palms of Idûme,
Where whitens the foam Of the Cyprian wave."

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say, the rhetorical part served, or still serves, its purpose ; what is of sheer beauty remains. We doubt if the achievement of any living poet could stand comparison with that of Giosuè Carducci in the great qualities of distinction, strength, and classic beauty. Within a limited range, Hérédia is the sole name to suggest ; but Hérédia is a sculptor in ivory, Carducci is of the kindred of Michael Angelo ; or, again, Hérédia is as one of the exquisite minor poets of the Anthology, Carducci a latter-day Catullus, with a far greater intellectual and national inspiration and range. Neither Hérédia nor Arturo Graf, not even Leconte de Lisle, has more truly cherished and given us anew "the antique beauty." For Carducci, the beauty that was of old is the one immortal thing in this world of mortal change and chance. For him, as he says in the *Primavere Elleniche*, "though all other gods may die," the divinities made immortal by the Greek genius "live still among ancient woods and in the eternal seas."

For Carducci, too, is the honour of having restored to Italian poetry the dignity it had long lost. This true brother of Catullus has not only moulded anew the form of

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lyric verse, but has set forward a strenuous ideal for his countrymen who would strive to recreate and not to imitate.

*Odio l' usata poesia : concedo
Comoda al vulgo. . . .*

* * * *

A me la strofa vigile, . . .

as he writes in the famous *Prelude*, in rhymeless Catullan verse, in the first series of the *Odi Barbare*.

But Carducci is much more than "the high-priest of impeccable form." He is a poet inspired by a lofty patriotism, a poet troubled by the deep problems of modern life, a prophet of high destinies, national and mundane. Even "the pagan note" throughout his work, sane and wise as no small part of it indubitably is, must not be over-emphasised. We find this pagan note, it is true, in every personal utterance even of the graver poet of mature age ; but now it is the utterance of one who realises that in the pagan spirit alone lies no likelihood of escape from the Slough of Despond. In contemporary Italian literature Carducci stands pre-eminent as the poet who has given his whole life to the service of his art, to the persistent ideal to recreate in beauty

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and distinction, to make his own art ("far l' arte") in his own way: the poet who writes:

*Or destruggiam, Dei secoli
Lo strato è sul pensiero:
O pochi e forti, all' opera,
Chè nei profondi è il vero.**

For fifty years Carducci has led the van of the literary Risorgimento. To-day he stands higher than ever, as immeasurably the greatest modern Italian poet. He has lived to see the seed of his wise and of his unwise "paganism" flourish, and to accept both harvests philosophically; but above all he has lived to rejoice that the nation at large is not only the richer but the stronger for what he has given of his best.

In one respect, at least, Gabriele D'Annunzio is to be mentioned with his great compatriot, for whatever be the shortcomings of this brilliant and fascinating personality—we speak of him solely as a writer in prose and verse—he has the unique poetic temperament. For him too the "word" is sacred, a secret minister, an

* "Now perforce we destroy. The highway of the ages is built upon thought. To the work, then, O few and strong, for truth is of the depths."

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ally to be won, at once slave and tyrant. For him too the one dominant ideal is "far l' arte," "to make art." D'Annunzio does not fall short of Carducci because of any lack of those shaping and colouring qualities which make for the rarest and highest art, but because, in the main, he has failed to see that it is not mere imagination that triumphs, but controlled imagination; that song must be the outcome of long spiritual meditation, so that from the greater depth it may soar to greater height; that spiritual understanding is as much the poet's concern as the swift flame of lyrical emotion. In a word, though D'Annunzio has all the artistic qualities, he has them to excess, so that there is no equipoise as with Carducci. Nor, with all his culture, his wide range, his cosmopolitan sympathies, has he the like instinctive scholarship—a scholarship that is something more than erudition, for we are thinking of a mental quality rather than of intellectual accomplishment. On the other hand, while more derivative than Carducci, he is not less lacking in originality. He is an instance, simply, of the literary temperament in alliance with that order of creative genius which must gather from many gardens, and

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in the gathering is both heedless as to what honey is stolen and indifferent to what accusations are bandied. And, in truth, the honey of the poet is all that need concern the critic of poetry. A poet's methods may be interesting ; it is the results that convince, or do not convince.

Moreover, D'Annunzio is less derivative in his poetry than in his prose. At any rate he does not "convey" in the one as he sometimes too audaciously does in the other ; though there are notable exceptions to this generalisation, as, for example, in the very Maeterlinckian passage in the drama *La Gloria*, where the group of physicians and others keep the vigil of death near the dying patrician. Of course as a young man he imitated, now Carducci, now Leopardi, now Baudelaire, now Catullus or the poets of the Greek Anthology, now Shelley, now de Musset. But these imitations were the tentative efforts of a potent personality that had not yet learned the height or direction of its true course.

Either as poet or novelist, however, D'Annunzio is not properly understood in this country. This is partly because he is an extreme exemplar of the pagan side of the Latin temper, and of the Latin habit

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of mind. Yet more and more, as we consider his already notable and variegated achievement, we believe that D'Annunzio's superabundant faults and shortcomings blind Northerners, not only to his marvellous art, but to his power and influence as an accepted type, as a signal genius of the Latin race. The gulf between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon is greater than is commonly recognised in these days, when it is a commonplace that racial distinctions tend to disappear. It is, on the contrary, possible, perhaps probable, that this gulf is not being bridged more and more, but rather that the division grows deeper.

Nor has D'Annunzio yet said all that he has to say. It might indeed be urged that he has now been long enough before the public for judgment to be passed on his limitations, for an estimate all but certain as to what he can *not* do. But it must be remembered that the author of *Primavere* was but a boy of fifteen; that the poet, dramatist, novelist of to-day is even now still a young man, being on the sunny side of forty.

It is as a poet of nature that D'Annunzio is at his best. With the exception of Giovanni Pascoli (to compare whom would be,

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as it were, to compare André Chénier and Baudelaire, or the author of *Endymion* with the author of *Poems and Ballads*), he has in this respect no rival. He has the compelling passion for the sea so characteristic of Swinburne; the love of mountain-solitude and lonely wilds so characteristic of Wordsworth, though a love less simple in sentiment and less natural in expression; something of the charm, too, that we find in Theocritus; something of the delicate and intimate touch of Tennyson. To this is added a rapt intensity of vision and emotion sometimes considered characteristically Celtic, though it is in truth too primitive and universal a quality to be adequately expressed by any literary label. We come to think of him at times, not as the D'Annunzio of scandal and criminal passion, but the poet pure and simple, as a faun become a man and a modern singer, who remembers old songs and the antique world, and at heart is a faun indeed, or at least "veritamente un figlio della terra antica," as in the *Song of the Sun* in *Canto Novo* :

*Sta il gran meriggio su questa di flutti e di
piante
Verde azzurrina conca solitaria :*

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*Ed io, come il fauno antico in agguato, m'
ascondo,
Platano sacro, qui fra le chiome tue. . . **

But if we are allured at times into this wonder-world of intimate nature, we are more often recalled to the sad world of weariness and disillusion, hearing the super-sensuous, decadent, *ennuyé* poet crying, "O cessate! la musica mi stanca," or "Chi potrà darmi un qualche nuovo senso?" There is one thing inevitable for him who drinks too long and too deep from the cup of experience. If weariness and disillusion may inspire, they must also weaken the art of the poet who has thus drunken and not known when to throw the cup aside.

*Sono spogliati tutti i miei rosai.
Non più ghirlande! E la mia coppa è vuota.
Bevvi, bevvi e ribevvi. Al fine ignota
Non me nessuna ebrezza . . . †*

* "The heats of noon whelm this green solitary hollow, filled with blue sheen like a shell of the sea; and I, as a faun of the antique time, in a branch-hid hiding-place, crouch here among thy shadowy boughs, O sacred plane-tree."

† "Despoiled now are all my roses: no garlands now! The bitter-sweet cup is empty. I have drunk of it again, and yet again, and yet again. Nothing, no intoxication, is left to me to know. . . ."

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It is the salutary part of this poetry of weariness, so characteristic, not only of D'Annunzio, but of all he stands for in that decadent phase of thought and literature and life of which, on one side at least, he is the foremost exemplar, that, when revulsion is at hand, the reader is almost always won back by some beautiful vision of the world we know and love, or by some deep and sincere cry from the poet's heart—"Allor che su 'l vento maestrale mi balzava la strofe . . . squillando annanzi, O mare, O mare, O mare!" *

In his so-called decadent verse, too, there is much of great beauty, some of it at least being no more "decadent" than is that poetic melancholy which is the habit of mind of all the poets of love, from Catullus or Omar Khayyam to Leconte de Lisle and Carducci. Read, for instance, *The Triumph of Iseult* (itself a metrical triumph in the difficult manner of Lorenzo di Medici), recalling as it does Villon and Swinburne and William Morris, and yet so unmistakably the poet's own, with its monotonously

* "Then on the tempestuous wind my song turns, crying, with great longing, O sea, O sea, O sea!"

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sweet refrain, "For everything save love is vain " :

Torna in fior di giovinezza

Isaotta Blanzesmano,

Dice : Tutto al mondo è vano.

*Nè l' amore ogni dolcezza ! **

That, too, is the poet's own, the stanza of Death, as a beautiful woman, closing the procession, however much the Guinevere and other stanzas suggest comparison with familiar lines of the poets named above :

Chiude il gran corteo la Morte ;

Non la dea de' cemeteri,

Ma una fresca donna e forte

Cui valletti lusinghieri

Sono i Sogni ed i Piaceri

Da 'l gentil volto pagano.

Dice : Tutto al mondo è vano,

Ne l' amore ogni dolcezza ! †

Perhaps one reason why D'Annunzio appeals more strongly than Carducci to the Italians of the North, to the French of

* "Cometh again, in her flower of youth, Iseult of the White Hands. She says : 'All the world is vain : in love only doth all sweetness live.' "

† "At the end of the noble *cortège*, Death ; not the sombre Lady of Graves, but a beautiful and strong woman, whose train-bearers are Dreams and Delights, each of a noble pagan beauty. And she too says : 'All the world is vain : in love only doth all sweetness live.' "

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the North, to the Germans and ourselves, is that he has more of the love of the mysterious. In one of his most beautiful short poems, the *Vas Mysteri*, in the *Poema Paradisiaco* volume of 1893, he makes, indeed, a direct invocation to that veiled Muse: "Apriti al fine, O tu che l'urna sei del Mistero!" And, again, because he is a prophet of "the joy to come" . . . that "far-off day of the travelling generations":

*Cantate, O venti! Ne l'ignoto mare
E l'Isola promessa:
La come in sommo d'un immenso altare
È la gioia promessa. . . .*

Gabriele D'Annunzio is now before his countrymen as a "national" poet. We do not think that his essentially lyrical and emotional genius is well fitted for a sustained flight; but perhaps of this no foreigner can properly judge. Meanwhile the lyrical epic of Garibaldi is in part given to the world.* In judging this lyrical epic,

* The *Canzone di Garibaldi*, published in 1901, is not, as many critics apparently imagine, a completed work. The present instalment is a poem of twenty-two sections amounting in all to 1004 lines. The actual title of this section is *The Night of Caprera*, and it is the third in a series

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or "epical series of lyrical chants," one must bear in mind the author's own comment that the poems should be recited aloud rather than silently read, "*per vivere della sua piena vita musicale, ella ha bisogno di passare nella bocca sonante del dicitore.*" But it must be admitted that, with many fine lines, and frequent subtle and enchanting effects, as in

*Ei si ricorda nell' alba di Novembre :
Quando salpò da Quarto era la sera,
Sera di Maggio conridere di stelle,*

there is also much mere rhetoric, and at times a bathos sinking to the level of distinctly commonplace prose.

Here, as in matters of deeper import, it is to be wished that D'Annunzio had more of the intellectual pride and artistic control of his greater compatriot, Giosuè Carducci ; and the more so as his influence is becoming steadily more potent in Italy, despite obstacles of all kinds, and notwithstanding both the unwise and the wise prejudices of possibly the majority of the critics and

of seven. In time we are to have the other "books" or sections : (1) *The Birth of the Hero* ; (2) *The Ocean and the Pampas* ; (4) *From Rome to the Pontine Marshes* ; (5) *Aspromonte and Mentana* ; (6) *The Crown of Peace* ; (7) *The Hero's End*.

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of the reading public. Carducci's high place is now beyond cavil. He for his part has ever thought of his to-morrow. Gabriele D'Annunzio has owed so much to French writers that it is to be wished he could more consistently have borne in mind, that he may henceforth bear in mind, the memorable words of Sainte-Beuve: "C'est à ce lendemain sévère que tout artiste sérieux doit songer." And what better watchword could he too have than that of his master the veteran Carducci, already adopted by Young Italy, fervent and hopeful: "O pochi e forti, all' opera!"—"To the good work, then, O ye few and strong!"

THE HEROIC AND LEGENDARY LITERATURE OF BRITTANY

IF one were asked what were the three immediate influences, the open-sesames of literature, which revealed alike to the dreaming and the critical mind of modern Europe the beauty and extraordinary achievement of the Celtic genius, it would not be difficult to name them. From Scotland came Macpherson's reweaving of ancient Gaelic legendary lore under the collective title of *Ossian*; from Wales came the *Mabinogion*, obtained and translated by Lady Charlotte Guest; and from Brittany came the now celebrated life-work of the Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarqué, the *Barzaz-Breiz*, or collection of the popular songs and heroic ballads of old Brittany—some mediæval, some with their roots in the heart of ancient Armorica.

The history of the influence of these three books—*Ossian*, the *Mabinogion*, and the *Barzaz-Breiz*—has never yet been pro-

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perly estimated. When a competent critic shall give us this history, in its exact and critical relation to literature itself, the deep and far-reaching power of what may be distinguished as fundamentally appealing books will be made apparent.

If these were the immediate influences in the awakening of the mind of Europe to the beauty and mystery and high significance of the old Celtic literature, legendary lore, and racial traditions, the general attention was attracted rather by two famous pioneers of critical thought. In France, Ernest Renan, himself of Celtic blood and genius, and having indeed in his name one of the most ancient and sacred of Armorican designations (Ronan), gained the notice of all intellectual Europe by his acute, poignantly sympathetic, and eloquent treatise on the *Poetry of the Celtic Races*. Later, in England, Matthew Arnold convinced his reluctant fellow-countrymen that a new and wide domain of literary beauty lay as it were just beyond their home pastures.

Since Renan and Matthew Arnold, there have been many keen and ever more and more thoroughly equipped students of Celtic literature ; but while admitting the immense value of the philological labours of men such

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as the German Windisch, the English Whitley Stokes, the French Loth, the Scottish Dr. Cameron, the Welsh Sir John Rhys, and the Irish Standish Hayes O'Grady, or of the more popular writings of collectors and exponents such as the late Campbell of Islay, Alfred Nutt, Standish O'Grady, and others, it would be at once unjust and uncritical to omit full recognition of the labours of collectors and interpreters such as, say, Alexander Carmichael in Scotland, and Hersart de la Villemarqué in France.

There can hardly be a student of Celtic literature who is unfamiliar with the *Barzaz-Breiz*, that unique collection of Breton legendary lore and heroic ballads so closely linked with the name of Hersart de la Villemarqué. This celebrated man—at once collector, folk-lorist, philologist, poet, and impassioned patriot—was not only born a Breton of the Bretons, but began life among circumstances pre-eminently conducive to his mental development along the lines where he has made his name of world-wide repute. His great work * was not

* *Barzaz-Breiz. Chants Populaires de la Bretagne, recueillis, traduits, et annotés par le Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarqué, M.I. (work crowned by the Academy of France).*

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only the outcome of his own genius and of his racial inheritance, but was inspired by his mother, a remarkable woman of a very ancient Armorican family. It is to her that the *Barzaz-Breiz* was dedicated: "À ma tendre et sainte mère, Marie-Ursule Feydeau du Plessix-Nizon, Comtesse de la Villemarqué." So significant are the opening words of his introduction to the new and definite edition (1893) that they may be given here :

A profound sentiment [he says in effect] inspired the idea of this book wherein my country stands forth self-portrayed, and in that revelation wins our love. In sending forth this revised reprint of my work, doubtless for the last time, and feeling myself to be as much as in my early days under the spell of her love, I dedicate this work to her who really began it, and that too before I was born—to her who enthralled my childhood with old-world ballads and legendary tales, and who herself was indeed for me one of those good fairies who, as the old lore has it, stand by the side of happy cradles. My mother, who was also the mother of all who were unhappy, once restored to health a poor wandering singer of the parish of Melgren. Moved by the sincere regrets of the poor woman at her inability to convey aright her gratitude to her benefactress, having indeed nothing in the world to offer but her songs, my mother asked her to repeat one or two of her treasury of folk-songs. So impressed was she by the original character of the Breton

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poetry, that often thereafter she sought and obtained a like pleasure. At a later date, though this was not for herself, she made a special quest of this ancestral countryside fugitive poetry. Such was the real origin—in a sense purely domestic and private, and primarily the outcome of a sweet and pious nature—of this collection of the *Barzas-Breiz*; some of the finest pieces in which I found written, in the first years of the century, on the blank leaves of an old manuscript volume of recipes wherein my mother had her store of medical science.

As for what M. de la Villemarqué himself did to qualify for his lifelong labour of love, he writes as follows :

To render this collection at once more complete and worthy of the attention of literary critics, and of all students of literature and life, scrupulous and conscientious care has been taken. I have gone hither and thither on my quest through long years, and traversed every region of Basse-Bretagne [Western and Southern Brittany], the richest in old memories ; taking part in popular festivals and in private gatherings, at our national *pardons* [pilgrimages], at the great fairs, at weddings, or the special *fête*-days of the agricultural world and of the workers in all the national industries ; ever by preference seeking the professional beggars, the itinerant shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and vagrant journeymen of all kinds—in a word, in the whole nomad song-loving, story-telling fraternity. Everywhere, too, I have interrogated the old women, nurses, young girls, and old men ; above all, those of the hill regions, who in the last

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century formed part of the armed bands of patriots, and whose recollections, when once they can be quickened, constitute a national repertory as rich as any one could possibly consult. Even children at their play have sometimes revealed to me unexpected old-world survivals. Ever varying as was the degree of intelligence in all these people, they were at one in this : that no one among them knew how to read. Naturally, therefore, the songs and legends and superstitions which I heard thus are not to be found in books, and never at least as here given ; for these came fresh from the lips of an illiterate but passionately conservative, patriotic, and poetic people.

In a word, Brittany is, in common with Ireland or Gaelic Scotland, the last home of the old-world Celt, of the old Celtic legendary and mythological lore, of the passing and ever more and more fugitive Celtic folk-literature. Scotland has her Campbell of Islay, her Alexander Carmichael; Brittany has Hersart de la Villemarqué.

The scientific value of M. de la Villemarqué's *Barzaz-Breiz* has been disparaged by some writers, to whom the pedantry of absolute literality is more dear than the living spirit of which language is but the veil ; and this on the ground that his versions are often too elaborated, and are sometimes modern rather than archaic. The best answer is in the words of the famous Breton

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himself, in the preface to the revised and definite edition. After detailing the endless care taken, and the comparative method pursued, he adds: "The sole license I have permitted myself is the substitution, in place of certain mutilated or vicious expressions, or of certain unpoetic or less poetic verses, of corresponding but more adequate and harmonious verses, or words from some other version or versions. This was the method of Walter Scott [in his *Scottish Minstrelsy*], and I could not follow a better guide."

The *Barzaz-Breiz*, or *Treasury of Breton Popular Chants*, is a storehouse of learned and most interesting and fascinating matter concerning the origins and survival and interrelations of the racial and other legendary beliefs, and superstitions, and folk-lore generally, of the Armorican people—Arvor, or Armorica, being the old name of Brittany, the Wales of France. In the introductory and appendical notes to each heroic ballad or legendary poem, Hersart de la Villemarqué has condensed the critical and specialistic knowledge of one of the most indefatigable and enthusiastic of folklorists; and this with the keenness of sympathy and of insight, and the new and

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convincing charm of interpretation, of a man of genius.

It is amazing how little of his work has been translated or paraphrased in English, especially when we consider the ever-growing interest in literature of the kind, and particularly in Celtic literature.

The three representative pieces which I have translated from the *Barzaz-Breiz* are not only typical of the ancient and the mediæval Breton romance or heroic ballad, but are given intact with their prefatory and appendical notes.

The Wine of the Gauls is one of the earliest preserved utterances of the ancient Armorican bards. *The Tribute of Noménoë* is still old, though not so ancient. *The Foster-Brother* is a type of both the style and substance of the mediæval folk-tale.

THE WINE OF THE GAULS AND THE DANCE OF THE SWORD

(DIALECT OF LÉON)

Argument

One is not ignorant that in the sixth century the Bretons often made excursions into the territory of their neighbours, subject

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to the domination of the Franks, whom they called by the general name of Gauls. These expeditions, undertaken oftenest under the necessity of defending their independence, were also sometimes ventured through the desire of providing themselves in the enemy's country with what they lacked in Brittany, principally with wine. As soon as autumn came, says Gregory of Tours, they departed, followed by chariots, and supplied with instruments of war and of agriculture; armed for the vintage. Were the grapes still hanging, they plucked them themselves; was the wine made, they carried it away. If they were too hurried, or surprised by the Franks, they drank it on the spot; then, leading the vintagers captive, they joyously regained their woods and their marshes. The piece here following was composed, according to the illustrious author of the *Merovingian Accounts*, on the return from one of these expeditions. Some tavern *habitués* of the parish of Coray intone it glass in hand, more for the melody than for the words; the primitive spirit of which, thanks be to God, they have ceased to seize.

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I

*Better is white wine of grapes than of mulberries ;
better is white grape wine.*

—O fire ! O fire ! O steel ! O steel !
O fire ! O fire ! O steel and fire !
O oak ! O oak ! O earth ! O waves !
O waves ! O earth ! O earth and
oak !—

*Red blood and white wine, a river ! red blood and
white wine !*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Better new wine than ale ; better new wine.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*Better sparkling wine than hydromel ; better sparkling
wine.*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*Better wine of the Gauls than of apples ; better wine
of the Gauls.*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*Gaul, vines and leaf for thee, O dunghill ! Gaul,
vine and leaf to thee !*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*White wine to thee, hearty Breton ! White wine to
thee, Breton !*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Wine and blood flow mixed ; wine and blood flow.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*White wine and red blood, and thick blood ; white
wine and red blood.*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

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'Tis blood of the Gauls that flows ; the blood of the Gauls.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*In the rough fray have I drunk wine and blood ;
I have drunk wine and blood.*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Wine and blood nourish him who drinks ; wine and blood nourish.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

II

Blood and wine and dance, Sun, to thee ! blood and wine and dance.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

And dance and song, song and battle ! and dance and song.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Dance of the sword in rounds ; dance of the sword.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Song of the blue sword which murder loves ; song of the blue sword.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

Battle where the savage sword is king ; battle of the savage sword.

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

*O sword ! O great king of the battlefield ! O sword !
O great king !*

—O fire ! O fire ! &c.

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*May the rainbow shine on thy forehead ! may the
rainbow shine !*

*—O fire ! O fire ! O steel ! O steel !
O fire ! O fire ! O steel and fire !
O oak ! O oak ! O earth ! O earth !
O waves ! O waves ! O earth ! O earth
and oak !*

Note

It is probable that the expedition to which this wild song alludes took place on the territory of the Nantais ; for their wine is white, as is that of which the bard speaks. The different beverages he attributes to the Bretons—mulberry wine, beer, hydromel, apple wine or cider—are also those which were used in the sixth century.

Without any doubt we have here two distinct songs, welded together by the power of time. The second begins at the thirteenth stanza, and is a warrior's hymn in honour of the sun, a fragment of the Sword Round of the ancient Bretons. Like the Gaels and the Germans, they were in the habit of surrendering themselves to it during their festivals ; it was executed by young men who knew the art of jumping circularly to music, at the same time throwing their swords into the air and catching them again.

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This is represented on three Celtic medallions in M. Hucher's collection : on one a warrior jumps up and down, while brandishing his battle-axe in one hand, and with the other throwing it up behind his long floating headdress ; on a second one, a warrior dances before a suspended sword, and, says M. Henri Martin, he is evidently repeating the invocation : "O sword ! O great king of the battlefield ! O sword ! O great king !"

This, it is obvious, would cast us back into plain paganism. At least it is certain that the language of the last seven stanzas is still older than that of the other twelve. As for its form, the entire piece is regularly alliterated from one end to the other, like the songs of the primitive bards ; and, like them, is subject to the law of ternary rhythm. I have no need to draw notice to what a clashing of meeting weapons it recalls to the ear, and what a strident blast the melody breathes.

THE TRIBUTE OF NOMÉNOË

(CORNOUAILLE DIALECT)

Argument

Noménoë, the greatest king whom Brittany has had, pursued the work of his country's

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deliverance, but by different means than his predecessors. He opposed ruse to force ; he feigned to submit to the foreign domination, and by these tactics succeeded in impeding an enemy ten times superior in numbers. The Emperor Charles, called the Bald, was deceived by his demonstrations of obedience. He did not guess that the Breton chief, like all politicians of superior genius, knew how to wait. When the moment for acting came, Noménoë threw off the mask : he drove the Franks beyond the rivers of the Oust and of Vilaine, extending the frontiers of Brittany to Poitou ; and taking the towns of Nantes and Rennes from the enemy, which since then have not ceased to make part of the Breton territory, he delivered his compatriots from the tribute which they paid to the Franks (841).

“ A remarkably beautiful piece of poetry,” says Augustin Thierry, “ and one full of details of the habits of a very ancient epoch, recounts the event which determined this grand act of independence.” According to the illustrious French historian, “ it is an energetically symbolic picture of the prolonged inaction of the patriot prince, and of his rude awakening when he judged the

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moment had come" (*Ten Years of Historical Studies*, 6th ed., p. 515).

I

The golden grass is mown ; it has misted suddenly.

—To battle !—

*It mists,—said, from the summit of the mountain of
Avez, the great chief of the family ;*

—To battle !—

*From the direction of the country of the Franks,
for three weeks more and more, more and more,
has it misted,*

*So that in no wise can I see my son return to me.
Good merchant, who the country travels o'er, know'st
thou news of Karo, my son ?—*

*Mayhap, old father of Avez ; but how looks he ?
what does he ?—*

*He is a man of sense and of heart ; he it was who
went to drive the chariots to Rennes,*

*To drive to Rennes the chariots drawn by horses
harnessed three by three,*

*Divided between them, they that carry faithfully
Brittany's tribute.—*

*If your son is the tribute-bearer, in vain will you
await him.*

*When they came to weigh the silver, there lacked
three pounds in every hundred ;*

*And the steward said : Thy head, vassal, shall
complete the weight.*

*And drawing his sword, he cut off the head of your
son.*

*Then by the hair he took it, and threw it on the
scales.—*

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*At these words the old chief of the family was like
to swoon :
Violently on the rock he fell, hiding his face with his
white hairs ;
And his head in his hands, he cried with a moan :
Karo, my son, my poor, dear son !*

II

*Followed by his kindred, the great tribal chief set
out ;
The great tribal chief of the family approaches, he
approaches the stronghold of Noménoë.—
Tell me, head of the porters,—the master, is he at
home ?
Be he there, or not there, God keep him in good
health !—
As these words he said, the lord to his dwelling
returned ;
Returning from the hunt, preceded by his great
playful dogs,
In his hand he held his bow, on his shoulder carried
a boar,
And the fresh blood, quite warm from the mouth of
the beast, flowed upon his white hand.
Good day, good day to you, honest mountaineers !
first of all to you, great tribal chief :
What news is there, what wish you of me ?—
We come to know of you if a law there be ; if in the
sky there is a God, and in Brittany a chief.—
In the sky there is a God, I believe, and in Brittany
a chief if I can.—
He who will, he can ; he who can, drives the Frank
away—
Drives away the Frank, defends his country, avenges
it and will avenge it.*

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*He will avenge the living and dead, and me and
Karo my child,
My poor son Karo, beheaded by the excommunicated
Frank ;
Beheaded in his prime, and whose head, golden as
millet, was thrown into the scales to balance the
weight !—
And the old man began to weep, and his tears flowed
down his gray beard,
And they shone as the dew on a lily, at the rising
of the sun.
When the lord saw this, a bloody and terrible oath he
swore :—
By this boar's head and the arrow which pierced it,
I swear it :
Before I wash the blood from my right hand, I shall
have washed my country's wound !*

III

*Noménoë has done that which no chief e'er did
before :
He went to the shores of the sea with bags to gather
pebbles,
Pebbles to tender as tribute to the steward of the
bald king.*
Noménoë has done that which chief ne'er did before :
With polished silver has he shod his horses, and
with reversèd shoes.
Noménoë has done that which chief ne'er did before :
Prince as he is, in person to pay the tribute he has
gone.—
Open wide the gates of Rennes, that I make entry in
the town :*

* The Emperor Charles, surnamed the Bald.

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With chariots full of silver, 'tis Noménoë who is here.—

Alight, my lord ; enter the castle ; and leave your chariots in the coach-house ;

Leave to the equerry your white horse, and come and sup above,

*Come to sup, and first of all to wash : there sounds the water-horn ; do you hear ? *—*

I will wash in a moment, my lord, when the tribute shall have been weighed.—

The first bag to be carried (and it was well tied),

The first bag which was brought, of the right weight was found.

The second bag which was brought, also of right weight was found.

The third bag that they weighed :—Aha ! aha ! this weight is not right !—

When the steward this saw, unto the bag his hand he extended ;

Quickly he seized the cords, endeavouring to untie them.—

Wait, wait, Sir Steward, with my sword I will cut them.—

Hardly had he finished these words, that his sword leaped from the scabbard,

That close to the shoulders the head of the Frank bent double it struck,

And that it cut flesh and nerves and one chain of the scale beside.

The head fell in the scale, and thus the balance was made.

But behold the town in uproar :—Stop, stop the assassin !

* Before the repast, at the sound of the horn, one washed one's hands.

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He escapes, he escapes ! bring torches ! let us run quickly after him.—

Bring torches ! 'twould be well : the night is black, and frozen the road ;

But I greatly fear you will wear out your shoes in following me,

Your shoes of blue gilded leather : as to your scales, you will use them no more ;

You will use no more your golden scales in weighing the stones of the Bretons.

—To battle !—

Note

This traditional portrait of the chief whose political genius saved Breton independence is no less faithful, from its point of view, than those of history itself. Thus, Augustin Thierry did not hesitate to place it in the gallery which contemporaneous history has preserved to us, and which he has so admirably restored. The latter proves by its general spirit, if by no precise feature, the exactitude of the anecdote. Before the time of Noménoë, for at least ten years, the Bretons had paid tribute to the Franks ; he delivered them from it : that is the real fact. The tone of the ballad is in harmony with the epoch.

As the head of the Frank charged to receive the tribute falls in the scales, where

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the weight is lacking, and the poet cries with ferocious joy, "His head fell in the basin, and the weight was thus made!" one remembers that a few years ago Morvan, the Lez-Breiz of the Breton tradition, said, trembling with rage: "If I could see him, he would have of me what he asks, this king of the Franks: I would pay him the tribute in iron."

In regard to the epic song with which the liberator of Brittany inspired the national Muse, the satirical song composed in the Abbey of St. Florent against Noménoë is opposed. The Frankish monks of the shores of the Loire could not pardon him the destruction of their monastery; and to avenge themselves they invented the following fable, which they chanted in chorus:

*In that time lived a certain man called Noménoë :
Of poor parents he was born ; his field he plowed
himself ;
But hidden in the earth an immense treasure he
encountered ;
By means of which among the rich many friends
for himself he made ;
Then, clever in the art to deceive, he began himself to
raise ;
So that, thanks to his riches, he finished by domi-
nating all, &c.*

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*Quidam fuit hoc tempore
Nomenotus nomine ;
Pauper fuit progenie ;
Agrum colebat vomere ;
Sed reperit largissimum
Thesaurum terra conditum ;
Quo plurimorum divitum
Junxit sibi solatium.
Dehinc, per artem fallere,
Cœpit qui mox succrescere,
Donec super cunctos, ope
Transcenderet potentia, &c.*

Poor Latin, poor rhymes, poor revenge.

THE FOSTER-BROTHER

(TRÉGUIER DIALECT)

Argument

This ballad, some variants of which I owe to the Abbé Henry, and which is one of the most popular of Brittany, is sung under different titles in several parts of Europe. Fauriel has published it in modern Greek ; Bürger picked it up from the lips of a young German peasant girl, and gave it an artificial form ; *The Dead go about Alive* is but an artistic reproduction of the Danish ballad *Aagé and Elsé*. A Welsh

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savant has assured me that his compatriots of the mountains possess it in their language. All are based on the idea of a duty, the obedience to the sacredness of the oath. The hero of the primitive German ballad, like the Greek Constantine, like the Breton cavalier, vowed to return, though dead ; and he kept his word.

We do not know to what epoch the composition of the two German and Danish songs, nor that of the Greek ballad, date back : ours must belong to the most flourishing period of the Middle Ages, chivalric devotion shining therein by its sweetest lustre.

I

*The prettiest girl of high degree in all this country
round was a young maid of eighteen years, whose
name was Gwennolaik.*

*Dead was the old lord, her two poor sisters and her
mother ; her own people all were dead, alas !
except her stepmother.*

*It was pitiful to see her, weeping bitterly on the
threshold of the manor-door, so beauteous and
so sweet !*

*Her eyes fixed on the sea, seeking there the vessel
of her foster-brother, her only consolation in the
world, and whom since long she had awaited ;*

*Her eyes fixed upon the sea, and seeking there the
vessel of her foster-brother. Six years had passed
since he had left his country.—*

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Away from here, my daughter, and go and fetch the cattle ; I do not feed you to remain there seated.—

She awaked her two, three hours before the day in winter, to light the fire and sweep the house ;

To go to draw water at the fountain of the dwarfs, with a little cracked pitcher and a broken pail :

The night was dark ; the water had been disturbed by the foot of the horse of a cavalier who returned from Nantes.—

Good health to you, young maid : are you betrothed ?—

And I (what a child and fool I was !)—I replied : I wot naught of it.—

Are you betrothed ? Tell me, I pray you.—

Save your grace, dear sir : not yet am I betrothed.—

Well, take my golden ring, and say to your stepmother that unto a cavalier who returns from Nantes you are betrothed :

That a great combat there has been ; that his young esquire has been killed over there, that he himself by a sword-thrust in the flank has been wounded ;

That in three weeks and three days he'll be restored, and to the manor will come gayly and quickly to seek you.—

And she to run at once to the house and to look at the ring : it was the ring that her foster-brother wore on his left hand.

II

One, two, three weeks had passed, and the young cavalier had not yet returned.—

You must be married ; I have thought thereon in my heart, and for you a proper man, my daughter, I've found.—

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*Save your grace, stepmother, I wish no husband other
than my foster-brother, who has come.
He gave me my wedding-ring of gold, and soon will
come gayly and quickly to seek me.—
Be quiet, if you please, with your wedding-ring of
gold, or I will take a rod to teach you how to speak.
Willy-nilly, you shall wed Job the Lunatic, our
young stable-boy.—
Wed Job ! Oh horror ! I shall die of sorrow ! My
mother, my poor little mother ! if thou wert still
alive !—
Go and lament in the court, mourn there as much as
you will ; in vain will you make a wry face : in
three days betrothed you'll be.*

III

*About that time the old gravedigger travelled through
the country, his bell in his hand, to carry the
tidings of death.
Pray for the soul which hath been the lord cavalier,
in his lifetime a good man and a brave.
And who beyond Nantes was wounded to death by
a sword-thrust in his side, in a great battle over
there.
To-morrow at the setting of the sun the watching will
begin, and thereafter from the white church to the
tomb they will carry him.*

IV

*How early you do go away !—Whether I am
going ? Oh, yes, indeed !—But the feast is not yet
done, nor is the evening spent.—
I cannot restrain the pity she inspires in me, and*

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*the horror which numbers this housewife who stands
in the house face to face with her ?
Around the poor girl, who bitterly wept, every one
was weeping, the nation around :
In the parish church this scene all were watching, all
both young and old ; all except the sexton and her.
The more the fillers in returning to the manor
touched their bows, the more they comforted her,
the more was her heart torn.
They took her to the table, to the place of honour for
supper ; she has drunk no drop of water, nor
eaten a morsel of bread.
They tried just now to undress her, to put her in
her bed : she has thrown away her ring, has torn
her wedding fillet ;
She has escaped from the house, her hair in disorder.
Where she has gone to hide, no one does it know.*

V

*All lights were extinguished ; in the manor every
one profoundly slept ; elsewhere, the poor young
maid was awake, to fever a prey.—
Who is there ?—I, Nola, thy foster-brother.—
It is thou, really, really thou ! It is thou, thou,
my dear brother !—
And she ran to go out, and to flee away on her brother's
white horse in saddle behind, encircling him with
her little arm, seated behind him.—
How fast we go, my brother ! We have gone a
hundred leagues, I think ! How happy I am
near unto thee ! So much was I never before.
Is it still afar, thy mother's house ? I would we
were arrived.—
Ever hold me close, my sister : ere long we shall be
there.—*

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*The owl fled screeching before them ; as well as the
wild animals frightened by the noise they made.—*

How supple is thy horse, and thy armour how bright !

I find thee much grown, my brother.

*I find thee very beautiful ! Is it still far, thy
manor ?—*

*Ever hold me close, my sister : we shall arrive
apace.—*

*Thy heart is icy ; thy hair is wet ; thy heart
and thy hand are icy : I fear that thou art
cold.—*

*Ever hold me close, my sister : behold us quite near ;
hearest thou not the piercing sounds of the gay
musicians of our nuptials ?—*

*He had not finished speaking when his horse
stopped all at once, shivering and neighing very
loud ;*

*And they found themselves on an island where many
people were dancing ;*

*Where young men and beautiful young girls, holding
each other by the hand, did play :*

*All about green trees with apples laden, and behind,
the sun rising on the mountains.*

*A little clear fountain flowed there ; souls to life
returning, were drinking there ;*

*Gwennola's mother was with them, and her two
sisters also.*

*There was nothing there but pleasure, songs, and
cries of joy.*

VI

*On the morrow morning, at the rising of the sun,
young girls carried the spotless body of little
Gwennola from the white church to the tomb.*

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Notes

As will be remembered, the German ballad ends, after the fashion of the stories of the *Helden-Buch*, by a catastrophe which swallows up the two heroes; it is the same with the Greek ballad published by Fauriel.

The ancient Bretons recognised several stages of existence through which the soul passed; and Procopius placed the Druid Elysium beyond the ocean in one of the Britannic Isles, which he does not name. The Welsh traditions are more precise: they expressly designate this island under the name of Isle of Avalon, or of the Apples. It is the abiding-place of the heroes: Arthur, mortally wounded at the battle of Camlann, is conducted there by the bards Merlin and Taliesin, guided by Barinte the peerless boatman (*Vita Merlini Caledoniensis*). The French author of the novel of *William of the Short Nose* has his hero Renoard transported thither by the fairies, with the Breton heroes.

One of the Armorican lays of Mary of France also transports thither the squireen Lanval. And it is there, one cannot doubt it, that the foster-brother and his betrothed

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alight : but no soul, it was said, could be admitted there before having received the funeral rites ; it remained wandering on the opposite bank until the moment when the priest collected its bones and sang its funeral hymn. This opinion is as alive to-day in Lower Brittany as in the Middle Ages ; and we have seen celebrated there the same funeral ceremonies as those of olden times.

1898

THE SEVENFOLD NEED IN LITERATURE

(*A Fragment*)

I. IDEA.

II. TECHNIQUE.

III. SPONTANEITY OF IMPRESSION.

FIDELITY OF OBSERVATION.

SINCERITY IN EXPRESSION.

Which together constitute the signature of truth, whether actual or imaginative.

IV. JUDGMENT :

Deliberation—which is the spiritual instinct of Symmetry, as it is the intellectual expression of Taste.

V. EMOTIONAL POWER :

(I) RHYTHM.

(II) EMOTION.

VI. INVENTION :

(I) AS FORMATIVE ENERGY.

(II) AS SYNTHETIC VISION.

VII. THE ACHIEVEMENT IN BEAUTY.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE Studies and Appreciations that are gathered together in this selection of the writings of William Sharp were intended by him to form part of a volume of essays on literature entitled *In the Garden of Letters*, prefaced by an essay on "The Literary Ideal," of which only the preliminary outline was sketched in the fragment, "The Sevenfold Need in Literature," now herein included.

These Studies and Appreciations were written at different periods of the author's career (from 1885 to 1902), either as editorials to Anthologies, to Collected Essays, or as contributions to periodicals. The essay on "The Sonnet, its History and Characteristics," prefaces his anthology of *Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century* (1886), and was preceded in 1885 by his edition of *The Songs and Sonnets of Shakespeare*. Concerning his critical preface to the latter volume, J. Addington Symonds wrote to the author that, in his opinion, "The Preface is more humanly and humanely true about Shakespeare's attitude in the Sonnets than anything which has yet been written about them. . . . You are one of those who live (as Goethe has for ever put it) in the whole. It is a great thing for modern criticism to get itself out of holes and corners, mere personal proclivities and scholarly niceties,

Bibliographical Note

into the large air of nature and of man." The paper on "Great Odes" was written for the author's collection of English Odes issued in 1890, and all three volumes were issued in the "Canterbury Series" published by Walter Scott, Ltd., to whom I am indebted for permission to include these three essays in my selection of my husband's writings. The critical memoir of Sainte-Beuve prefaces an English translation of the French critic's *Essays on Men and Women*, which appeared in the "Masterpieces of Foreign Authors," published by David Stott, in 1890.

"The Literature of Brittany," originally printed in vol. xxvi. of Warner's "Library of Best Literature" (New York, 1898), is a study on the Heroic and Legendary Literature of Brittany in the sixth century, as translated by Hersart de la Villemarqué in 1850. "*La Jeune Belgique*" was printed in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1893, the appreciation of "Some Dramas of D'Annunzio" in the *Fortnightly* in 1900; "The Modern Troubadours" (1900) and "Modern Italian Poets" (1902) were written for the *Quarterly Review*; and to the editors of those periodicals I desire to tender my sincere acknowledgment of their courtesy, whereby I am enabled to include the three essays in this present volume.

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